

# Bitterne Church of England Junior School

Brownlow Avenue, Bitterne, Southampton, SO19 7BX

**Inspection dates** 6–7 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- In the last three years, not enough pupils have made sufficiently good progress to reach more than broadly average levels of attainment, particularly in writing.
- Not enough consideration is given to the extent of pupils' progress in judging the impact of teaching.
- When teachers get feedback about the quality of their work, the advice that leaders give about improvement is not always sharp enough.
- The match of tasks to pupils of different abilities and the questions asked of them are not always demanding enough.
- Teachers' plans for learning do not always include clear lesson purposes or criteria by which to judge successful learning.
- Not all teaching sets a brisk pace for learning, nor makes effective use of time.
- Some teachers spend too much time on overlong explanations.
- The use of target setting does not always help pupils to reach a clearer understanding of the next steps in their learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- The school is welcoming. Pupils enjoy good relationships with adults and are happy to be at school.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the improvement of teaching and achievement. More teachers now share leadership roles.
- Pupils feel safe in school, show good attitudes and behaviour and cooperate well. Their attendance is above average.
- Pupils' performance is tracked regularly and accurately and, where necessary, this leads to additional support for those who need it.
- The programme of coaching for teachers is starting to improve the quality of teaching.
- Governors are confident to hold the school to account for its performance.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also heard some pupils in Years 3 and 4 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school’s staff, the Chair and two other members of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority.
- Because there were not enough responses, inspectors were unable to take account of the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They analysed the 43 responses that were on Parent View by the end of the inspection.
- Inspectors also took account of the 19 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school’s own data on pupils’ current attainment and progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding, the curriculum and management of the performance of staff.

## Inspection team

Chris Grove, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Margaret Faull

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding to support particular groups of pupils who might underachieve) is below average at less than 12%.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average at almost 15%.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average at less than 3%.
- No pupils receive alternative provision (such as teaching in other schools or units).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school belongs to the Portswood Teaching School Alliance (an organisation involving Southampton schools aiming to raise pupils' achievement).
- The breakfast club is managed by the governing body. The after-school club is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

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

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by improving:
  - pupils' understanding of what, precisely, the purpose of the work set them is, through always making clear to them the planned objectives for learning and the criteria by which successful learning will be judged
  - the pace of learning and teachers' effective use of time
  - the opportunities that teachers take to involve pupils through discussing their learning.
- Speed up pupils' progress in order to raise their attainment, particularly in writing, by:
  - providing a consistently good challenge to pupils' reasoning and thinking through an improved match of tasks and questions to pupils of different abilities
  - helping pupils to develop a clearer understanding of the next steps in their learning through more effective reference to the targets necessary to reach the next level of attainment.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders' and managers' checks on the quality of teaching and learning through:
  - more emphasis on pupils' progress when observing and making judgements about teaching
  - sharper advice to teachers about what they could do to improve their practice.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' progress across the school in recent years has not been good enough, and requires improvement. However, there was some improvement in progress in mathematics in 2012, though not in English. One reason is that more pupils made the progress expected between Year 3 and Year 6 in mathematics than in writing.
- The school's records show that the progress of current pupils is beginning to improve in writing as well as in reading and mathematics. This is especially evident in Years 3 and 4. However, pupils' progress is not yet consistently good across the whole school.
- Over the last three years, attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 has been broadly average. Attainment in reading and mathematics has been better than in writing, though results in 2012 showed improvement on the previous year.
- When pupils first enter the school, their attainment varies from year to year. Typically, their attainment is broadly average, though lower in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- Lower-attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoy reading. They mostly read confidently, demonstrating the phonic knowledge (linking letters to sounds) to pronounce less familiar words, such as 'foolish' or 'inform'. Pupils show that they understand the characters and plot of stories they read, and can make sense of their reading of factual books. Their reading logs indicate that they have read a variety of books in this school year.
- Those eligible for the pupil premium show some improvement in achievement. In 2012, these pupils improved their attainment in mathematics, though not in English, in comparison with other pupils in the school, when measured by average point scores in assessments at the end of Year 6. The school uses this funding in various ways. For example, an additional assistant undertakes catch-up work in English and mathematics, and pupils in Year 6 are taught in smaller groups. The funding also enables participation in peripatetic music lessons. These represent significant ways in which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make similar progress to that of others.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not resulted in consistently good progress over time. However, inspection evidence indicates that the quality is beginning to improve.
- Although much teaching of English and mathematics involves setting different work for different pupils, the match of tasks to the learning needs of pupils of different ability is not consistently good. Therefore, occasionally, some pupils are not given work that is demanding enough. In discussions with pupils, teachers do not regularly achieve a good match, for example by directing more difficult questions at those pupils who would benefit from such a challenge.
- Teachers' planning sometimes focuses too much on activities that the pupils will carry out, and too little on a clear learning purpose, or on the criteria by which successful learning will be judged. Such teaching results in weaker progress.
- In the most effective teaching, the lively pace results in a good sense of direction to the learning. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils made rapid progress in developing empathy with someone feeling a sense of loss because of the very good pace to learning set by the teacher, which engaged pupils particularly well. However, not all teaching achieves such a brisk pace to engage pupils' interest.
- Where teaching is good, teachers discuss the learning keenly with pupils. This involves pupils well, and also gives teachers opportunities to assess the quality of the learning achieved. In a successful lesson in Year 6, for example, a class of lower-attaining pupils made good progress in understanding decimals because question-and-answer work was well conducted. This teacher's skilful classroom organisation and good use of time also maximised the focus on learning. By

contrast, time is not always so well used. For instance, other teachers sometimes spend too long in explanations while expecting pupils to listen passively.

- Teachers' marking gives pupils regular feedback about what they could do to improve further. Teachers also analyse, and record accurately, pupils' progress through the National Curriculum levels. However, pupils do not receive consistently clear feedback from assessments, for example in writing, about the targets necessary to reach the next attainment level.
- Teachers and pupils get along well. With hardly any exception, parents agree that their children are happy at school and are well looked after.
- Teaching assistants make positive contributions to pupils' learning, and especially for those who are disabled, have special educational needs, or may be vulnerable.

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

- Pupils respond well to the school's friendly, welcoming ethos, displaying responsible attitudes and well-governed behaviour. They regularly show a real readiness to learn.
- In lessons, pupils listen carefully to teachers, and cooperate willingly with others, such as with their 'talk buddies'. They are usually responsive to teachers' questions, are diligent and apply themselves productively to the tasks set for them.
- On the few occasions when pupils become unfocused, teachers quickly manage to restore their concentration.
- At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils are well behaved around the school. They judge that bullying and racism are not an issue, and say they feel confident to talk to an adult if necessary. Exclusions from school have diminished considerably and are now rare.
- In discussion, pupil representatives say they feel safe in school because they learn about issues such as 'stranger danger' and the need for e-safety. Almost all the parents who completed the online survey agreed that their children felt safe. Those members of staff who completed a questionnaire were unanimous in their positive views about pupils' safety.
- The school's frequent focus on regular attendance leads to rates that are above average.
- The breakfast club is well attended and well supervised, and offers healthy food options. It provides enjoyable activities in a secure environment, is popular with pupils and encourages good attendance.

### **The leadership and management require improvement**

- Leadership and management require further improvement because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not yet good.
- The headteacher regularly undertakes classroom observations of teaching and learning. However, not enough consideration is given to the extent of pupils' progress when judging the impact of teaching. Furthermore, teachers do not consistently receive sharp enough advice about how to improve pupils' progress.
- More leaders are now involved in self-evaluation activities, linked to the school's Raising Attainment Plan. These effective arrangements involve checking pupils' progress half-termly. If evidence shows that pupils are not making sufficient progress, additional steps are taken to provide support. Performance management and appraisal arrangements are appropriate with salary progression aligned to the quality of teaching.
- One significant initiative has been the appointment of a member of staff to act as a coach, supported through the local school alliance, to make possible the professional development of other teachers. This improvement is beginning to have a positive impact.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's recent performance and provides good support. It has brought to the leadership's attention the need for improvements to provision in order to secure better progress.

- There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. The school balances this focus by good attention to other subjects, for instance imaginative artwork and specialist music teaching – including learning an instrument in Year 4. Improved links between subjects are resulting in better opportunities for pupils to apply writing skills in other subjects, such as in history. Residential visits and the extensive programme of activities beyond the timetabled day, involving a range of sports, a youth theatre, orchestra and choir, promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school focuses rigorously on all aspects of safeguarding. Statutory requirements are met. Leaders also make sure that any pupils who are vulnerable are well supported.
- The capacity to secure further improvement is shown by evidence of improving progress in some year groups. The school has largely resolved the issues from the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body shares the leaders’ vision for further improvement. Governors receive full information, so that they have a clear understanding of pupils’ current achievement and the impact of teaching. They are also aware of the implications of the nationally produced data on school performance, which indicate the need for improved progress. The responsibility of conducting the management of the headteacher’s performance in achieving targets set is rigorously undertaken. Governors are well informed about the formal appraisal of other members of staff, and assure themselves that proposed salary progression is merited. They know how the pupil premium is spent and how this funding contributes to the performance of those eligible. Governors ensure that training, for instance in performance management, is effectively used to support their capacity to hold the school to account.

## 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>	405641
<b>Local authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	116339

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	237
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cheryl Hubbard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andy Peterson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 March 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 499494
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