

Barleyhurst Park Primary School

Forfar Drive, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 7NA

Inspection dates

7–8 March 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 | | 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

- Over the last two years, standards have been significantly below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Some pupils have not made enough progress at Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils make better progress in some year groups than others because teaching is not yet good in all classes.
- Teachers do not always match work to the needs of different groups of pupils. At times, their expectations are not high enough, especially for more-able pupils, and they do not ask questions that push pupils to think deeply.
- In mathematics, teachers do not all have good subject knowledge and their marking does not always inform pupils about how to improve their work.
- Until recently, the headteacher has not received enough support from other senior leaders. This has slowed the rate of school improvement.
- Leaders are at an early stage in using information about the progress of different groups of pupils to inform their judgements.
- A number of members of the governing body are new and in the process of developing their skills. They do not yet have a detailed grasp of what progress information reveals about the school's effectiveness.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is always at least good and some is outstanding.
- In the rest of the school, teaching is improving and it is good in many lessons. In Years 2, 5 and 6, good teaching is helping pupils to make faster progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well and say that they feel safe in school.
- The school provides some very effective support individually and in small groups for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The headteacher's leadership is good and she is rigorous in her drive to raise achievement and improve teaching.
- The recent appointment of a new deputy headteacher and senior teacher has strengthened the leadership team so that the school is now better placed to improve.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 16 lessons, three jointly with the headteacher, and they saw parts of sessions where teaching assistants worked with individual pupils and small groups. They observed a whole-school assembly, sampled pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a group of pupils and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed questionnaires completed by 27 members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, its development plan, and information about pupils' attainment and progress. They looked at records relating to aspects of behaviour and safeguarding, and at teachers' planning.

Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

David Westall

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average and so is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and from service families) is a little above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2010 soon after a merger of the previous infant and junior schools. A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2012 and a new senior teacher took over the role two weeks before the inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes to the governing body. A number of governors are new and the Chair of the Governing Body took over in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the amount that is good or better by:
 - making sure that teachers always match work to the next steps in learning for different groups of pupils
 - making sure that teachers' expectations are consistently high, especially in the work they set for more-able pupils
 - developing the way teachers use questioning to challenge pupils' thinking
 - making sure that all teachers have good subject knowledge in mathematics
 - increasing the guidance teachers provide when marking pupils' work in mathematics.
- Raise standards and increase the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - developing pupils' skills in solving problems in mathematics
 - concentrating on filling the gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge, particularly in subtraction and division
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across a range of subjects
 - developing the skills of more-able pupils so that they are better able to identify and interpret themes in the books they read.
- Strengthen leadership and management in order to speed up the school's rate of improvement by:
 - making sure leaders and governors hold all teachers firmly to account for matching learning to the needs of different groups of pupils in their class
 - sharpening the way leaders use information to analyse the progress of groups of pupils
 - providing more training for the governing body in interpreting progress information so that they are able to draw conclusions for themselves about the school's effectiveness.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over the last two years, standards have been significantly below average at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. In the recent national screening check of Year 1 pupils' knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), the school's results were below average.
- Although attainment in English was broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012, it was below average in mathematics. Some pupils made less progress than expected in mathematics and too few pupils reached higher levels in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are not all skilled in solving problems in mathematics and some have gaps in their knowledge, particularly of subtraction and division. The literacy skills of more-able pupils are sometimes held back by their lack of confidence in identifying and interpreting themes in the books that they read.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that is below that typical for their age and well below expectations in reading and mathematics. They make good progress in the Reception class because the teaching of literacy and numeracy is well structured and other activities are varied and stimulating. Children move up to Year 1 with attainment that is broadly average.
- Good teaching in Year 2, and especially in Years 5 and 6, is now helping more pupils to make better than expected progress. School records, lesson observations and pupils' work show that pupils currently in Year 6 should reach higher standards than those who left in 2011 and 2012.
- A recent focus on writing is leading to clear improvement in pupils' achievement throughout the school. Topic work and educational visits are encouraging pupils to write more imaginatively and at greater length. In Year 6, for example, a pupil produced a lengthy and detailed piece of writing, entitled 'So you want to be an embalmer?', following a visit to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford as part of a topic on Egypt.
- Past outcomes for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have varied. However, the school has done a lot of work recently to improve the way these pupils are supported. Those who receive help from teaching assistants individually or in small groups are now making good progress because work is matched very closely to their learning needs.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals performed well below their classmates in English and mathematics in 2012. At the end of Key Stage 2, they were almost a year behind their classmates in English but two terms ahead of them in mathematics. They made less progress than other pupils in English but more in mathematics. The school's records of its pupil premium spending show that it is gradually enabling the pupils for whom it is intended to make faster progress.
- In some years, pupils from particular ethnic backgrounds have done better than others but there is no clear pattern to this. In lessons observed, pupils of minority ethnic heritage and those who speak English as an additional language made similar progress to their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time has required improvement and it is not yet enabling pupils to make good progress in all classes.
- Where there are shortcomings in teaching, this is mainly because work is not matched closely to the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations about the work pupils are capable of doing, especially in mathematics where some teachers' own subject knowledge is not developed as well as it might be. More-able pupils are not always challenged enough and not all teachers question pupils in a way that probes their understanding fully. Pupils say that there are occasions when teachers do not explain work clearly in mathematics.

- The school has concentrated on improving the marking of pupils' written work and some very good marking was seen in English. Marking generally provides much less guidance to pupils in mathematics and sometimes important errors go unchecked.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good and, at times, outstanding. During the inspection, children made excellent progress in a whole-class lesson exploring capacity. As they investigated how much liquid could be held by containers of different shapes and sizes, the teacher's high expectations and skilled questioning pushed them to make predictions and use mathematical language precisely.
- Where teaching is good in the rest of the school, teachers plan their lessons well to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. They check regularly to make sure pupils all understand the work and quickly adapt activities when misunderstandings occur. Throughout the school, teachers have established good relationships with their pupils.
- Teaching assistants who work with pupils at school action plus and those who have a statement of special educational needs make a very good contribution to their achievement, and there is some highly sensitive support for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. Extremely detailed daily records of each pupil's attainment and progress help to inform programmes of work linked closely to the targets in their individual education plans.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school. In the Reception class, children focus exceptionally well for their age, listen carefully and become totally absorbed in activities.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils generally have positive attitudes to learning and concentrate well in lessons. Just occasionally, the attention of some pupils wanes, but disruptive behaviour is very rare. On the playground and around the school, behaviour is good.
- The school promotes positive relationships and is quick to tackle any hint of discrimination. Pupils get on well together and respect differences. They feel safe in school and are safety-conscious. They know that the staff take good care of them, and parents and carers agree that their children are kept safe in school.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying but suggest that it really does not exist in the school. Records show that there are few incidents of bullying and these are quickly dealt with.
- The attendance rate is broadly average. It is not higher because a small number of pupils are persistently absent, despite the school's best efforts.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders have been only partly successful in improving the quality of teaching, which was identified as an issue at the previous inspection.
- The headteacher has had to develop many essential systems from scratch because very little was in place when she took up post. Until the recent appointment of new senior leaders, she has had to carry much of the burden of leadership alone so that, despite her good leadership, the school has improved more slowly than it should have done.
- There is very little information available about pupils' attainment and progress prior to 2010. Leaders have gathered a good amount of information about pupils' achievement over the last two years but are not yet using this to full effect to inform judgements about the school's effectiveness. For example, leaders do not have key information about the performance of different groups of pupils 'at their fingertips', although there is a clear shared ambition and commitment to raising achievement.

- The headteacher makes sure that teachers' work is thoroughly checked and she has been rigorous in managing teachers' performance and tackling weaknesses in teaching. Teachers are now held to account for the progress that individual pupils make and the school is increasingly checking to make sure all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
 - Regular checks on teachers' work lead to a clear identification of what needs to be improved and to an increasing amount of good teaching. Staff who are responsible for subjects have good opportunities to develop their leadership skills, and opportunities for training have been extended to teaching assistants as well as teachers. This has resulted in clear improvements for pupils who receive additional support.
 - The school has improved the way subjects and topics contribute to the development of pupils' writing and appropriate attention is being given to reading. There are fewer opportunities, however, for pupils to practise and use their mathematical skills outside mathematics lessons. Pupils benefit from a good range of clubs and educational visits which enrich their learning and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
 - Partnership with parents and carers is good. The school website provides them with helpful information about how mathematics is taught in each year group, and the involvement of parents and carers in the Early Years Foundation Stage through home-learning journals is exemplary.
 - The local authority worked very closely with the school following the last inspection. It has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and continues to provide valuable support.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - New governors are attending a number of courses to develop their skills, the new Chair of the Governing Body is working closely with senior leaders, and focused governor visits to the school have been established. Governors are ambitious for the school. They are asking leaders challenging questions and know about the quality of teaching. They are aware of how performance management is used to reward effective teachers and are providing good support to the headteacher in tackling underperformance. Although some governors have had training about progress information, they do not yet know how to interpret it to judge the school's performance for themselves. They keep careful control of the school's finances and make sure that pupil premium funding is spent appropriately so that it contributes to the progress of those for whom it is intended. They make sure that statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding pupils.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 110327 |
| Local authority | Milton Keynes |
| Inspection number | 401114 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 198 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Simon Kelley |
| Headteacher | Wendy Smith |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 May 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01908 378291 |
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