

Balgowan Primary School

Balgowan Road, Beckenham, BR3 4HJ

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
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

- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. They make good progress and achieve well.
- Reading is especially well taught. By Year 6, the vast majority of pupils are fluent and confident readers who enjoy books.
- The Reception classes give children a good start to their education in a supportive environment which helps them to settle well and become independent.
- Good support for pupils who find learning difficult, or who are at an early stage of learning English, helps them to achieve well.
- Teaching is good and the interesting activities provided encourage a love of learning as well as promoting above average attainment.
- Pupils attend regularly and behave well both in lessons and around the school. They say they feel safe in school.
- The headteacher, leadership team and governors work closely and very effectively together to make sure that teaching and achievement continue to improve.
- Parents and carers are positive about the school. They believe that their children are happy in school and are being taught well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and this means that achievement is not yet outstanding, particularly in writing.
- Though pupils know what they have to do in lessons, they do not always have clear enough guidance on how to do it and this can slow their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons or part lessons, including one joint observation and a series of short visits (a learning walk) with school staff. They listened to pupils reading and attended an assembly and other activities.
- Meetings were held with the school council and two other groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, and a range of staff including senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked at the school's information on pupils' attainment and progress, records on behaviour and safety, attendance, the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, as well as safeguarding documents and other school policies.
- Inspectors scrutinised 144 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), several emails and the school's own surveys. Other parental views were sought at the start and finish of the school day. Inspectors also scrutinised 47 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Grace Marriott, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional inspector
Tim McLoughlin	Additional inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Balgowan is an above average-sized primary school. It became an academy school managed by the Balgowan Academy Trust in August 2011. When the predecessor school, Balgowan Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding (the pupil premium) is low. This is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and the children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is also below average.
- The school does not manage the on-site after-school club, so it was not included in this inspection. The latest report for the after-school club can be found on the Ofsted website.
- The school does not use any alternative provision (lessons that take place regularly away from school).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to further raise achievement by:
 - making sure that pupils always have clear guidance, in lessons and through the marking of their work, on how to tackle the tasks they are set
 - strengthening the subject and phase leaders' roles in improving teaching by focusing more on sharing good practice.
- Improve attainment in writing to match the high level in reading, by making sure that work always matches pupils' needs so it is not too easy or too hard and builds on what they have already achieved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start at the school with skills that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress so that by the time they leave the school in Year 6 their attainment is above average.
- As one parent or carer said, 'Children get off to a very good start and do really nice creative things.' In the Reception classes children make good all-round progress and excellent progress in reading. They learn to be independent as well as learning to share and play very well with other children.
- The upward trend in attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is continuing. In 2012, Year 2 assessments were well above average overall and high in reading where almost all pupils achieved the level expected for their age and over half achieved the higher level (Level 3).
- Results in the Year 6 tests in previous years have been well above average in both English and mathematics. In 2012 they were average overall. This was because a small number of pupils had interruptions to their education. They made good progress once they joined Balgowan but were not able to make up for previous underachievement. Pupils in the current Year 6 are making at least good progress and a high proportion have already reached the levels they would be expected to have reached by the end of year.
- There are still some minor variations in progress between some groups. In the Year 6 tests in 2012, the overall attainment of the pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium was approximately three-quarters of a level lower than that of their peer group in English and almost a full level in mathematics. All these pupils, including those who had joined the school late, had made good progress from their starting point. Good work is being done to help pupils catch up and the gap in attainment with other pupils in the school is closing. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English are well-supported in class and in small groups so that they make good progress.
- Pupils' reading skills contribute strongly to their progress in other subjects. In the younger classes their good knowledge of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) helps pupils read unfamiliar words very well. Older pupils read with real understanding for a variety of purposes. Attainment in writing is above average but not quite as high as reading. Attainment in mathematics has also improved. Pupils have good skills and are learning to apply them successfully to solving problems and practical work.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good at all stages and some is outstanding. Good teaching is ensuring that pupils make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to plan lively and interesting activities which motivate pupils to want to learn. Teachers regularly share the aims of the lesson with pupils so that they know what is expected of them.
- In the best teaching, as for example in an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 4 on the properties of angles, teachers systematically check progress throughout the lesson and intervene quickly to deal with misunderstandings and extend learning. Sometimes, though, pupils working independently, mostly on writing tasks, do not make as much progress as those working in groups with teachers or teaching assistants. This is because the guidance given to them is not clear enough to help them make rapid progress. Work is usually well matched to pupils' needs so it is not too hard or too easy but at times does not take enough account of their previous learning.
- In the Reception classes staff make very good use of their records of children's progress to plan activities which help children to settle quickly, enjoy learning and make rapid progress in basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics as well as in creative and physical activities.

- In the school as a whole, the high-quality teaching of reading means that pupils develop a love of books. They were keen to talk about Book Week and were clearly impressed by the visits of some of their favourite authors to the school.
- Information gained from marking and other checks on pupils' progress is used to improve planning. The best marking is very good and has a significant effect on pupils' progress because pupils receive clear feedback and the time to work on responding to the marking. This quality of marking is not yet consistent enough in all classes to make sure pupils can make really rapid progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils told inspectors that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical. Staff are generally consistent in the way in which they implement the school's rewards and sanctions and pupils understand why good behaviour is important.
- Children in Reception are encouraged to take responsibility, for example in keeping the classroom tidy, and they learn to play and learn well together. Older pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and around the school.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and pupils are polite and friendly towards adults. Pupils feel safe and know that there are adults whom they can trust and to whom they can turn if there any problems.
- Good behaviour contributes very well to learning. On a learning walk, the working atmosphere in all classes was purposeful and productive and pupils were able to make good progress. Pupils concentrate well and there is little disruption. Behaviour is not outstanding because on the very few occasions when behaviour was not as good, it was because pupils were not sure what was expected of them.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe. Even young pupils know what constitutes bullying and what to do about it. Pupils and parents and carers say that bullying does not often happen and if it does, it is quickly dealt with.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy form a strong partnership. Their drive and commitment are resulting in secure improvement. Building well on the school's strengths, they have systematically and successfully ensured that achievement and the quality of teaching are improving. Staff and governors share their vision and have confidence in their leadership.
- The leadership team and middle leaders are ambitious for the school and their development plans are clearly focused on moving from good to outstanding. The phase and subject leaders are starting to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and on pupils' progress. However, these leaders need to do more to promote the sharing of good practice to ensure that all teaching matches the quality of the best.
- Teaching is systematically monitored and this has helped to increase the proportion of good teaching. Staff know that they are being held strongly to account through the performance management systems. They are also supported well through professional development.
- The school is using its pupil premium funding well to provide pupils with a variety of additional support, tailored to the needs of individuals. This includes support in lessons and in small groups, particularly in mathematics, mentoring and social skills groups and access to school activities.
- The school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding.
- The vibrant and creative curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to link their learning across subjects. For example in one lesson where the focus was on writing accurate instructions, the discussions about how to program a robot were both animated and productive as pupils used their mathematical and information and communication technology skills and learnt from their mistakes. Music, drama, sport, visitors, such as noted authors, and visits to

places of interest all successfully promote strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

- Parent View showed good levels of satisfaction overall, and high levels of satisfaction in relation to teaching, progress and how safe and happy their children are. Parents and carers also praised the quality of provision for pupils who have special educational needs.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are effective in supporting the leadership team and holding leaders to account. They understand data on the school's performance and know how well the school is doing and where there are areas for improvement. They check carefully the impact of actions taken to improve teaching and are aware of how good this is overall. This includes checking performance management and its relationship to salaries and promotion. Governors' financial management meets statutory requirements and they make sure that the pupil premium is used effectively to support pupils who may be underachieving. The proposed temporary expansion of the school has adversely affected the relationship with a minority of parents and carers who disagree with the governing body's decision. The governors are very aware of this and actively working on ways of improving communication with parents and carers generally.

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	101739
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	403692

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	650
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Spedding
Headteacher	Andrew Swatland
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	020 8658 6374
Fax number	020 8663 0251
Email address	admin@balgowan.bromley.sch.uk

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