

# Old Hill Primary School

Lawrence Lane, Cradley Heath, B64 6DR

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	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

- Teachers do not always mark pupils' work in enough detail to help them to improve and move on to the next steps in their learning.
- Standards reached by pupils are not yet high enough as the improvements led by school leaders have been relatively recent.
- Governors do not fully challenge the school leaders in all areas of their work.
- Teaching is not good enough in all classes to make sure that pupils make consistently good progress and achieve high standards.
- Teachers with specific subject responsibilities are inexperienced and so are limited in how much they can develop the skills of others.
- Teacher assessment of pupils' attainment is accurate, but is not always used to make sure that teaching is well matched to pupils' needs.
- Leaders, managers and governors are beginning to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, but these are not yet good.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are polite, friendly and proud of their school. They have positive attitudes to learning and relationships are good.
- Pupils are taught a good handwriting style and most of their work is clearly and attractively presented.
- Pupils study subjects that interest them, are linked to their own lives and make them want to learn more.
- Senior leaders are committed to improving the school and have developed suitable systems to assess pupils' work and measure the progress they are making.
- Attendance is greatly improved and is now average. This is due to the good relationships with parents and the perseverance of staff in following-up absences.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, including four joint observations with the headteacher. They saw all teachers teach and also saw parts of several lessons and observed small-group sessions where pupils were receiving extra support.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with parents at the start and end of the school day. There were not enough responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for it to be accessible. Inspectors also took account of the 19 replies to the staff questionnaire.
- In observing the work of the school, inspectors read many documents including school evaluation and improvement plans, records of attendance, behaviour logs, safeguarding arrangements, governing body records, school policies, data on progress and pupils' work.
- Inspectors also talked to pupils, listened to some of them read and observed them at lunchtimes and during breaks.

## Inspection team

Jenny Edginton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Deborah Whittle

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with around one fifth from different minority ethnic groups. The proportion that speaks English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, although the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below average.
- A well-above average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for specific groups of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, in local authority care or from service families).
- 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?

- Make sure that all teaching is consistently good or better by:
  - making sure that the marking policy is consistently applied so that pupils know how to improve their work and have time to respond to teachers' comments
  - enabling staff to learn from each other by sharing the best practice that already exists in the school.
- Speed up pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by analysing assessment information to make sure that work is always set at the right level for pupils.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - making sure that all governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing so that they can challenge leaders as effectively as they support them
  - improving the effectiveness of teachers with subject responsibilities by continuing the training to develop their management and coaching skills.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement in mathematics, and especially in English, continues to require improvement because performance is still below average. This is because some teachers do not always use their assessments of pupils' prior learning to plan and deliver the most effective teaching for all pupils to take the next steps in their learning.
- Many pupils start school with skills and abilities well below those expected for their age. They make the nationally expected and, increasingly, good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Most pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are now making nationally expected progress and some are making more than expected progress, although in some classes pupils are not being moved on fast enough to achieve as well as they might. This is because teaching is not always good enough to fully challenge all pupils.
- The focus of senior school leaders on raising standards in all areas has started to have a positive impact and more pupils are now set to reach the higher levels of attainment they are capable of.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making overall similar progress, given their starting points, to other groups of pupils. Those pupils who are from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are also making similar progress to others in the school.
- The progress of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium has improved because of well-organised and targeted support through small-group teaching. The school was successful last year in making sure that there was no gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals and the others in mathematics. In English, these pupils were less than half a term behind the others. There are no pupils in the school who are from service families or who are in local authority care.
- Most parents who spoke to inspectors believed that their children were doing well and some commented on the good attitudes to learning which children developed in school.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent, as in some classes pupils do not make enough progress because work is not set at the right level for them and they are unclear about what is expected of them. The existing best practice in the school is not shared sufficiently among staff to enable all to come up to the level of the most accomplished.
- Because of improved assessment methods, teachers have a wide range of information about pupils' learning, but some teachers do not always use this effectively and so they do not always set work at the right level for them. In good lessons, teachers use this information to question well and to build on what pupils already know.
- The careful planning between teachers and support staff plays a valuable role in making sure that small-group teaching is successful in helping pupils who need extra support, such as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium.

- Checks made by school leaders show that teaching is getting better but still needs improvement. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and plan carefully to give challenging and exciting lessons which make pupils think hard. One classroom has a poster which says, 'Your mind is like an umbrella – it only works when it's open', which encourages pupils to think about their own learning.
- Marking encourages pupils but is not always precise enough or followed up by the teacher to make sure that pupils take the next steps to improve. Teachers do not always give pupils the time to respond to their comments or to act upon them.
- Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception means that children can make decisions for themselves with many opportunities for role-play and outdoor activities. These are balanced by teacher-led activities where children are taught to use their knowledge of phonics (the sounds that letters make) to start to read accurately.
- Teaching several subjects through themes helps pupils to apply and improve their skills and link ideas. A well-planned topic on Victorian life saw pupils studying local buildings and the school through visits and old photographs, and a dance based on a Dickens novel to perform at a festival.
- Whole-school themes such as investigating an imaginary alien landing teach many skills, including reading, writing and mathematics, and also successfully help pupils to start to organise their own learning.

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

- Pupils are confident and polite to adults, eager to explain their work, and behave well in lessons. Relationships are a strength of the school. The shared humour between teachers and pupils in many classes reflects mutual respect and enjoyment in learning.
- Effective links with specialist behaviour-support agencies and the continued efforts of staff have transformed behaviour in recent years so that the formerly high exclusion levels have fallen to zero.
- Pupils clearly understand what constitutes bullying and say that it is rare in school. They say that there are arguments and 'winding up' but that this is quickly sorted out by staff and that they feel safe in all areas of the school. They appreciate the games and equipment provided for them at lunchtimes, including the 'Friendship Stop', as they say that all are included.
- Records show how the care and support provided by the school has had a major impact on the behaviour of individuals and also often helped entire families.
- Attendance has increased markedly. This is because of the determination of the headteacher that pupils should be in school whenever possible, her constant encouragement and the effective procedures the school now uses.
- Although there were no online responses to consider, the school's own surveys show that parents overall are happy with the way behaviour is managed and think that their children are safe in school. This was confirmed by almost all of the parents spoken to by the inspection team.

## The leadership and management requires improvement

- Teachers who have extra responsibilities are relatively inexperienced in helping others to improve the teaching of specific subjects. Through working with a partner school they are starting to develop management skills so that they can share good practice across the school.
- Assessment now accurately shows where pupils have got to but is not yet always used as well as it could be to move pupils rapidly on to the appropriate next steps in their learning.
- The headteacher's evaluation of what the school needs to do to improve is accurate and has helped her to draw up comprehensive and realistic plans for the future. A lot has been achieved but she knows that there is further to go.
- There are regular checks on what teachers are teaching and pupils are learning and lessons are observed regularly. Staff training has improved teaching in most classes, although teaching is not yet consistently good across all of them.
- The local authority has helped school leaders to develop their skills and has provided generous support which has shown good results as the school has improved.
- The use of the pupil premium has been carefully thought out and checked and has led to rapid improvements for eligible pupils.
- The school promotes equal opportunities for all and makes sure that there are measures in place to tackle any discrimination that may occur.
- A strength of the school is the range of activities, clubs and charitable involvements which help the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Music lessons, residential visits and 'forest school' sessions are popular with pupils and are carefully planned by the staff to develop many skills and give wide and rich experiences.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors support the work of the school and the headteacher in her drive to secure best progress for all pupils. They are still developing their role after years of much less involvement in holding the school to account. There have recently been several changes to the governing body. All governors now receive basic training in their roles and more advanced training in areas such as progress information is being provided. This means that they are beginning to be better able to compare the school and its progress against others both locally and nationally and so to challenge the headteacher when needed. They are beginning to understand about the quality of teaching. They make sure that the budget is well managed, including the use of the pupil premium, and know how it is used to make a positive difference. They understand about the links between staff pay and performance and how targets are set for teachers to improve their performance. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance. Statutory duties are observed including making sure that policies for safeguarding are appropriate and regularly reviewed.

## 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>	103952
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	404916

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	186
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pauline Riley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Fenby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 569213
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