

Boxmoor Primary School

Cowper Road, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead HP1 1PF

Inspection dates 23–24 April 2013

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Inadequate | 4 |
| | 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

- Senior leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching in English and mathematics is improving steadily. However, not enough is consistently good and very little is outstanding.
- Most pupils make at least the progress expected nationally by the time they leave. However, in some lessons the work set for pupils is either too hard or too easy, and this limits the progress they make.
- Some teaching assistants do too much for the pupils, so they come to depend on adult support in order to progress.
- The successful approach that has been adopted by teachers across the school to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and communication is not applied in most other subjects.
- Some subject leaders do not check the quality of teaching often and thoroughly enough to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress to reach or exceed the levels of attainment expected nationally for their age.
- The school does not develop pupils' understanding of and appreciation for cultural diversity well enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Good leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children quickly make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils in Year 6 are prepared well for the transfer to secondary school, both socially and academically.
- Pupils of all ages read widely and often.
- Pupils' behaviour and sense of safety in class, around the school and out in the playground are good. They enjoy school and get along well together.
- Most parents and carers are strong supporters of the school, and the governing body keeps them up to date with improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by 10 different teachers. Four of these were seen together with the headteacher or deputy. In addition, the team heard some pupils reading individually and looked at a range of pupils' written work.
- The team looked at a range of documents including the school's own evaluation its performance and plans for improvement, policies and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance, and those relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account 67 responses to the online (Parent View) survey. They also considered comments from 20 staff who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire and three parents and carers who wrote to the lead inspector.

Inspection team

Linda Killman Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Fatiha Maitland

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British with a small proportion from minority ethnic heritages. Very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school receives extra funding for these pupils, known as the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is below average. This includes pupils with minor learning difficulties (school action), those with more complex learning needs (school action plus) and those with significant learning difficulties requiring a written statement outlining their learning and/or physical needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The population is stable, with very few pupils joining or leaving partway through the school year.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage includes a part-time nursery session every morning and one Reception class.
- In its previous inspection in April 2012, the school was given a notice to improve because leaders and managers were not taking effective action to improve teaching and other aspects of provision. The headteacher is new since then and the Key Stage 2 leader has stepped up as acting deputy until the newly appointed deputy arrives in September. Turnover of teaching staff has been high over the past 12 months.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the next school year, make most teaching good and more outstanding by:
 - using effective teaching methods in all subjects and setting work at the right level of difficulty to cater for pupils' different needs and abilities
 - ensuring that teaching assistants know when to intervene and when to step back and allow pupils to work on their own
 - providing teachers who perform consistently well with training and guidance designed to move their teaching to outstanding.
- Extend pupils' improving achievement in English and mathematics to other subjects by:
 - agreeing how different subjects should be taught and how teachers should check that pupils are making enough progress
 - teaching new skills in each subject systematically while providing opportunities for pupils to practise and apply those they have already learnt
 - ensuring that teachers in charge of different subjects check often and thoroughly that all subjects are taught well, so that pupils reach or exceed the expected levels for their ages
 - promoting pupils' understanding of different cultures, customs and religions locally, within the United Kingdom and abroad.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In the nursery, children make good progress because they engage in exciting, purposeful activities inside and outdoors that are carefully planned to promote their learning through play.
- Children continue to make good progress in Reception. The majority of children in Reception have already reached the early learning goals in all areas of learning with a term still to go. Children's early reading, writing and number skills, as well as their personal and social skills, are above average by the time they move into Year 1.
- In 2012, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average in reading, writing and mathematics, although the work seen in current pupils' books in Years 1 and 2 indicates that the amount they write is limited and often untidy.
- Year 6 pupils' achievement is improving. In 2012, attainment in English was above the national average following a dip that lasted for the previous two years, and it continues to rise. It is average and rising in mathematics, having improved considerably from 2011 to 2012.
- Across the school, pupils read regularly and enjoy books. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make proficiently to tackle unfamiliar words. Older pupils explore a range of authors and genres and recommend their favourites to others.
- Better help and guidance for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is accelerating their progress steadily. Some, but not all, are making good progress.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium are making much better progress than previously. The gap between their attainment in English and mathematics and that of other pupils is closing steadily in most classes and markedly in Year 6, where they receive some very effective one-to-one tuition in literacy and numeracy.
- The main reason why pupils' achievement is not yet good is its inconsistency across a wide range of subjects. In reading, for example, most pupils achieve well, but in writing, achievement is too variable. In most other subjects, there is no evidence to show that pupils are acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding quickly and securely.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in the lessons visited during the inspection was often good, but it varied considerably. In one lesson teaching was inadequate because the teacher did most of the talking, the pupils sat passively for too long and eventually lost interest.
- Outstanding teaching is too rare for teaching to be judged good overall. Staff whose teaching over time is consistently good do not experiment with adventurous and original methods and approaches that inspire pupils to excel – they play safe.
- Each term the proportion of good teaching increases. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 6 is consistently good. In other classes, records of teaching over time show improvement in most classes although there remain inconsistencies.

- In all classes, relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and model good personal skills for pupils to emulate. This contributes to pupils' good personal development.
- The best teaching maximises pupils' involvement throughout the lesson. There is plenty of scope for pupils to work together, share ideas, solve problems and review their performance. The work is set in real-life contexts, as illustrated in a good mathematics lesson where pupils rose readily to the challenge of calculating quantities of party food needed for 25 guests.
- The quality of marking in English and mathematics in most classes is good, indicating clearly what pupils need to do next to improve their work.
- In some classes the potential for teaching assistants to accelerate pupils' learning is not maximised. Sometimes the adult helps too much, for example by selecting and giving out resources when pupils are capable of doing this for themselves, or in the most extreme cases actually doing the work for them. In addition, some teachers fail to check at regular intervals in lessons that the extra help is promoting good learning as intended.
- In English, mathematics and in music where subject knowledge is secure, teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning. They use the information to plan work at different levels of difficulty, although some do this with greater precision than others. In some other subjects, such as science, geography and history, no systems exist for assessing and recording achievement to enable teachers to plan a range of activities that are suitably challenging for all.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are super ambassadors for the school. They show respect, consideration and good manners towards adults and each other. The older pupils (most of whom are well-rounded, mature individuals) look out for the younger ones so that break time is enjoyable for all age groups.
- A well-developed sense of right and wrong is evident in classrooms and in the playground, where pupils stick to the rules. The very large majority of parents, carers and staff who contributed to inspectors' evidence agreed that pupils behave well. Exclusion rates are very low.
- Pupils are well informed about different types of bullying and report that it is extremely rare. They know how to keep themselves safe and who to turn to if they are worried or upset. The school records and acts upon inappropriate behaviour appropriately.
- In lessons, pupils are keen learners. They listen well, responding quickly and positively to instructions and advice about how to improve their work. Some pupils commented that the work is sometimes too easy and one said 'thus I didn't achieve all that I should have' – Boxmoor pupils like a challenge.
- Pupils ensure that everyone is included. New arrivals soon make friends and feel well looked after. Pupils are well prepared for secondary transfer socially as well as academically, and as one noted poignantly, 'Moving to different secondary schools has brought us even closer together; we want to enjoy each other's company in the time we have left.'
- Pupils are community-spirited. They enjoy taking on responsibilities during the school day, raising funds for charities and taking part in a wide range of sporting and musical events. When asked about different cultures, customs and faiths, pupils had an adequate but limited

understanding.

- Attendance is average, despite some families taking holidays during term time, and pupils arrive on time. The school promotes good attendance through the school newsletter and a new termly attendance award.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the teachers in charge of subjects other than English and mathematics are not checking how well their subjects are taught often or thoroughly enough. Some do not know how well pupils are progressing because the school does not have a consistent approach for assessment and the collection of data. They are not identifying opportunities for pupils to explore and learn more about cultural diversity in different subjects.
- Teaching staff are held to account for the progress pupils make in English and mathematics. They attend regular meetings led by the headteacher where they are expected to submit their latest data and provide evidence to justify the progress that pupils are making. Checks of pupils' progress in other subjects are few and far between.
- The headteacher, acting deputy and governing body are clearly focused on moving the school to good, and aspire for it to be outstanding in the future. They are addressing inconsistencies in teaching through a programme of training, support and development combined with regular checks and explicit expectations that practice will improve as a result. The proportion of good teaching is rising term by term in English and mathematics.
- Key leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The action plans to move the school forward focus appropriately on improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school has used good external support provided by the local authority to work on areas for improvement raised in the last inspection. As a result the quality of leadership has improved, especially in terms of the capacity for tackling weaknesses in teaching.
- The arrangements for managing teachers' performance are based securely on the recently updated national teaching standards. Staff know that future promotion and pay rises depend on the standards being met. The governing body ensures that the headteacher's performance is appraised annually and knows the systems used internally to check staff's performance.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Provision and practice across Nursery and Reception are consistently effective and children reach a good level of development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection, when the governing body was taken by surprise when the school went into a category. Realising that at the time it did not have an independent view of how well the school was performing, the governing body has taken concerted action to improve its effectiveness. As a result of training, governors are now able to interpret data on pupils' achievement and they visit the school regularly to check for improvement. As a result, the governing body is in a much better position to ask the right questions so that the headteacher and other leaders are held to account. It ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. The budget is healthy and pupil premium funding is spent wisely to narrow the gap in attainment between the pupils it is intended for and other pupils. The governing body has successfully maintained a healthy

partnership between parents, carers and the school by ensuring that they are updated regularly on how well the school is performing. High staff turnover has been managed appropriately with temporary arrangements until the school is in a position to appoint staff of a suitable calibre.

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 | 117107 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 408830 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 237 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Susan Markham |
| Headteacher | Pam Dosanjh |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 December 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01442 402244 |
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