

Mrs Bland's Infant and Nursery School

Jordans Lane, Burghfield Common, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3LP

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2013

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		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils reach standards at the end of Key Stage 1 that are broadly average. Not enough of the brightest pupils achieve the higher levels, however.
- Most pupils make expected progress from their starting points and some make good progress. However, some pupils make slower progress during Key Stage 1, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Pupils do not make as much progress in reading as they do in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching varies in quality. Some teaching is good but this is inconsistent. Weaker teaching prevents pupils from making good progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do not attend regularly enough. They do not reach the same standards as other pupils, although this gap is beginning to close.
- Not all leaders are yet having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' progress is strong during the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide pupils with clear next steps for improvement. Teachers assess pupils' learning accurately.
- Pupils behave well around the school. They are polite and enjoy coming to school.
- The acting headteacher has worked hard to make improvements. As a result, teaching and pupils' achievement are beginning to improve.
- Governance is effective. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They challenge leaders effectively and this is helping the school to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 13 lessons including four joint observations with the acting headteacher.
- Inspectors held a range of meetings, including with the acting headteacher and other leaders, teachers, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, a group of parents, a group of pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked carefully at pupils' work and teachers' marking.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at breaks and lunchtimes.
- A range of the school's documentation was examined by inspectors, including records of lesson observations, the improvement plan and the checks the school makes on how well it is doing, checks on teachers' performance, information about pupils' current achievement and attendance, teachers' lesson plans, key policies and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors considered 41 responses to Parent View and three emails from parents, as well as 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Matthew Haynes, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Cole

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

- Mrs Bland's Infant and Nursery School is a smaller than average primary school.
- The acting headteacher took up post in November 2012 following the retirement of the previous headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed from September 2013 and she has been working at the school two days a week since January 2013.
- Over 80% of pupils come from White British backgrounds. About 5% of pupils come from Romany or Gypsy backgrounds, which is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for extra government funding (the 'pupil premium'), including pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is just below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is below average, as is the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There is after-school provision at the school, 'Funzone', but this is not managed by the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - eradicating weaker teaching and sharing the best practice more effectively
 - improving the teaching of linking letters with the sounds they make so that all pupils make good progress in reading
 - making sure that all pupils are effectively challenged by giving them tasks that are accurately matched to their abilities
 - checking pupils' progress in lessons and giving them extra support or challenge when they need it.
- Raise pupils' achievement so that it is good by:
 - accelerating the progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
 - increasing the proportion of more-able pupils that achieve Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics
 - ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress through effective support in lessons and targeted interventions
 - improving pupils' progress during Key Stage 1 so that it is consistently good.
- Improve the attendance of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Make sure that all leaders have an effective impact on pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils start school with skills that are broadly average for their age. Most pupils make expected progress during their time at the school. As a result, standards are average by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 2.
- Some pupils make better progress, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, this is not consistent across different classes or subjects throughout the school. Not enough of the brightest pupils achieve Level 3 by the end of Key Stage 1.
- Pupils make better progress in writing and mathematics than they do in reading. This is because the teaching of phonics is not yet consistently good. Recent improvements in provision for reading, for example the way pupils' reading logs and reading targets are used, are beginning to have a positive impact.
- The extent to which pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics are developed across the curriculum varies too much. In some classes pupils are challenged to practise and apply these skills effectively. In other classes, the level of challenge is too low and as a result pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- The average points scores of pupils eligible for the pupil premium are below those of other pupils. Pupils eligible for free school meals, including many of the pupils from Gypsy or Romany backgrounds, make adequate progress. The progress that they make is not yet good enough, however, to help them reach the same standards as other pupils. There are early signs that this gap in attainment is beginning to close because of the extra help the school has put in place to support these pupils. This includes small group and individual support sessions.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least expected progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their progress slows, however, during Key Stage 1. The support they receive in and out of lessons is not yet having a significant impact on their achievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good. Although teaching has improved since the previous inspection, it varies too much between different classes and lessons.
- There is some good teaching. In these lessons pupils are engaged because the activities have been carefully selected to match their abilities. The brightest pupils are stretched by challenging questions. Lower ability pupils are supported well so that they make good progress. In these lessons teaching assistants support pupils' learning effectively.
- When teaching is weaker, teachers often spend too much time talking to the pupils. This slows the pace of lessons. Pupils are not given enough time to explain their thinking and practise the skills they are learning. Teachers do not check pupils' progress regularly enough in order to make sure pupils are making good progress.
- In lessons that require improvement, pupils are set work that is too hard or too easy. Teachers do not use what they know about pupils' learning to set challenging tasks. As a result, pupils do not learn enough or do enough work. Learning objectives are used to introduce lessons, but these often describe what pupils are going to do rather than what they are going to learn.
- Marking has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' work is marked regularly and in detail. Pupils are given feedback about how well they are doing and are given clear advice about how to improve. In the best marking, pupils respond to comments and improve their work. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate.
- The majority of parents think their children are well taught and that teaching is improving. Some parents think that homework is better because of the recently introduced extended learning projects. There are parents, however, who disagree and who do not think either teaching or homework are yet effective enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**require improvement**

- Behaviour has improved because of a recently introduced behaviour management system. Consequently, poor behaviour has reduced rapidly. Pupils respond well to the new process, and the majority of parents think it is working.
- Pupils behave well around the school and at breaks and lunchtimes. They are polite and show respect for each other and for adults.
- Behaviour is good in lessons where teaching is good. However, when teaching is weaker, pupils lose interest and concentration. They are sometimes slow to get on with their work.
- The school keeps detailed records of incidents and these show that bullying and racial incidents are very rare. Some pupils know about the different types of bullying. There have been no exclusions.
- Pupils feel happy and safe at school, and the majority of parents agree. Some pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.
- Most pupils' attendance is average, but pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do not attend regularly enough. Leaders are taking steps to address this, but these have not yet had any significant effect.

The leadership and management**require improvement**

- The acting headteacher has worked extremely hard to improve the school. As a result, pupils' achievement and teaching are getting better. She is tackling weaker teaching effectively. New arrangements for checking teachers' work are now in place which make sure that teachers are only rewarded for good performance.
- Teachers know what the elements of good teaching are and what they need to do to improve. The acting headteacher observes all teachers regularly, making accurate judgements and giving teachers precise points for development which are followed-up. Teachers have regular training, including visits to observe good and outstanding teaching in other schools.
- Some other leaders are also having a positive impact. For example, teachers' marking has improved greatly, as has the accuracy of their assessments of pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is tracked in detail. These actions are improving pupils' learning, since pupils know what they need to do to improve and teachers have the information they need to match tasks to pupils' abilities.
- Not all leaders have had a similar impact, however, particularly in terms of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Leaders know the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. They have made good use of the improvement plan since November 2012 to increase pupils' progress. However, there has not yet been sufficient focus on improving the progress of different groups of pupils, for example those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Communication with parents has improved. Most parents now feel that they are well informed by the school, for example through more regular newsletters.
- The curriculum has been reviewed and revised. There is more of an emphasis on practical and active learning. Opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are good. However, the curriculum is not yet meeting the needs of all pupils since they do not all have an equal opportunity to succeed. Also, opportunities to apply pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are not maximised.
- The local authority has provided a range of effective support since the previous inspection. This has helped the school improve, for example through supporting the improvement of teachers' planning and making sure that teachers' marking is accurate. The local authority has monitored the progress of the school regularly.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been strengthened since the previous inspection by the appointment of five new governors. The Chair of the Governing Body has been in the role since October 2012 and is providing strong leadership. Governors have an accurate view of the strengths

and weaknesses of teaching. They regularly receive detailed information about pupils' achievement which helps them challenge and support the school effectively. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact this is beginning to have. The budget is managed well. Governors ensure that safeguarding meets statutory requirements. There are rigorous procedures in place to appraise the acting headteacher's performance, and they know how the performance of staff is checked.

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	109887
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	399659

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Dando
Headteacher	Judith Crompton
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 January 2012
Telephone number	01189 832332
Fax number	01189 835867
Email address	jcrompton@mrsblands.w-berks.sch.uk

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