

Blue Coat Church of England Aided Infant School

Hanch Place, Walsall, WS1 3AF

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- All pupils make rapid progress throughout the school and some make exceptional progress.
- Teaching is consistently good. There are examples of outstanding practice, but not yet sufficient for teaching to be outstanding overall.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is average at the end of Year 2, with a rising trend in reading now apparent.
- Pupils' communication and language development is consistently promoted well throughout the school.
- Pupils behave well, they care for and support each other and say that they feel very safe in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Pupils speak with excitement about trips and themed days that help them understand the different subjects they are studying.
- The executive headteacher, well supported by the head of school and the governing body, has clearly identified the key areas to improve the school further and to create strong links with the federated junior school.
- Leaders and managers have been highly effective in ensuring that the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) has improved pupils' reading skills so that they are better able to read and spell unknown words.
- Parents value the school and appreciate the support given to their children who may have learning or behavioural difficulties or speak English as an additional language.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teachers regularly mark pupils' work and give clear guidance about how they can improve, they do not consistently give time for the pupils to respond to these comments and so make the improvements.
- Pupils are not always clear about what levels they are working at and what they need to do to reach the next level. As a result, they are not able to take responsibility for moving their own learning on.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 28 lessons and part-lessons and saw 16 members of staff teaching and working with the pupils. They were accompanied by the executive headteacher and head of school and early years coordinator to 17 of the sessions.
- Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and with pupils from Key Stage 1. The inspectors also took account of the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors heard pupils read from Year 1 and Year 2.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the school's development plans, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of pupils' progress and work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of the 14 responses to the online Parent View survey, correspondence from two parents and the school's survey of parents' views. They also held informal discussions with parents at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Jenny Batelen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Capron

Additional Inspector

Patricia Underwood

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized infant school, with 10 classes.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a 26 place Nursery and three Reception classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. These include pupils with moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, social and emotional difficulties and those with physical needs. There are currently two pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- A higher proportion of pupils than average come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds, including those of Pakistani, African, Caribbean and Eastern European heritage.
- A larger proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families. There are currently no children of service families at the school.
- The school federated with the neighbouring junior school in November 2011. Both schools are led by an executive headteacher, who took up his post in September 2012. The day-to-day running of the school is managed by the head of school. There is a single governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement so that a higher proportion of pupils across the school make exceptional progress by:
 - giving pupils time to respond to comments in teachers' marking so that they can improve their work
 - helping pupils to know what levels they are working at and what they need to do to reach the next level.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels well below those typical for their age, especially in communication and language, reading, writing and calculation.
- All pupils, including those from a range of backgrounds, make at least good progress throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils in Year 2 make exceptional progress, particularly in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are clearly identified at an early stage and their needs assessed. Teachers set targets, in consultation with parents, to address pupils' particular difficulties and as a result, pupils make good, and sometimes excellent, progress so that they catch up with their peers. Grouping by ability for English and mathematics and for one-to-one sessions is particularly effective in helping these pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language settle and acquire basic language skills quickly so that they can take part in all lessons. An effective strategy pairs newcomers with pupils already in school who speak the same language and can work alongside them, building confidence as well as language skills in both pupils. As a result, these pupils make excellent progress and begin to catch up with their classmates.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are helped to become confident speakers as they are constantly challenged to improve their language skills in all areas of learning. Children in a Reception class demonstrated their developing and confident use of language as they told the story of *'Giraffes Can't Dance'* to demonstrate the theme of 'never give up' in an assembly presented to the whole school and their parents.
- The focus on developing spoken language skills continued throughout Key Stage 1 as pupils respond to questions in full sentences, talk to partners and repeat full sentences to help with their understanding in all subjects. As a result, pupils become confident speakers, have a good understanding of mathematical language and are improving their sentence-writing skills.
- Skilled phonics teaching ensures that pupils are confident, expressive readers with a good understanding of the text and of punctuation. The recent phonics screening check shows pupils improving on last year's check and exceeding that found nationally in 2012. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy reading.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in line with their peers in reading, writing and mathematics. The extra funding is used to provide additional adult support, resources such as reading books and also to ensure that these pupils access the full range of activities that the school provides thus promoting equal opportunity and ensuring that no pupil is discriminated against. Consequently, although these pupils' attainment is lower than for other pupils, the gaps in reading, writing and mathematics are narrowing compared with other pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons are particularly well structured so that what pupils have learnt previously is developed and extended effectively. Pupils know why they are undertaking the day's task, as was demonstrated in a Year 2 mathematics lesson when higher-ability pupils practised division of two-digit numbers by a single digit. They told their teacher this was because they had found this difficult in their recent assessments. As they practised and improved their skills, they told the inspector how they 'love division'!
- Teachers have high expectations. They plan tasks that challenge pupils to move their learning on. Adults question and check on pupils' understanding and adjust tasks, when necessary, so that pupils consolidate what they are learning and make good progress.
- Lessons are taught at a brisk pace so that pupils quickly make progress in their learning.
- Teachers accurately mark pupils' work and provide development points. However, the

opportunities for pupils to respond to these comments are not regularly provided and so chances for pupils to improve their own work and make further progress are missed.

- Some pupils are aware of the level they are working at and what they need to do to reach the next level. This is not true of all pupils and therefore they are not all able to take responsibility for ensuring that they are practising the necessary skills. As a result, their progress towards the next level is slower than it could be.
- Adults working in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good understanding of the needs of young children. Tasks are planned that excite and motivate them and adults model the correct skills so that children learn well. This was clearly demonstrated in a phonics lesson when children were able to recognise and read new words as the teacher modelled breaking the word down into its separate parts to read.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants give strong support, working alongside teachers with groups and individuals. They also take responsibility for leading learning in groups during English and mathematics.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils told inspectors how they enjoy school, saying that 'it is a place where you can learn and do fun things'. As a result, pupils' behaviour is typically good. They form strong and trusting relationships with all staff and say they feel very safe. Pupils support each other and value the successes of each other.
- The good teaching means that pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and are usually fully engaged in their learning. Very occasionally, some pupils get over-excited and slow the pace of the lesson down as the teacher redirects this enthusiasm.
- Pupils move around the school and in the playground sensibly and safely. Zoning areas for specific types of play ensures that playtime is safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how they should behave in the different areas and enjoy the opportunity to share the Peace Garden, 'a calm place where we don't run', and told the inspectors of the fox and the robin who live there.
- The involvement of supervising staff in the playground activities ensures that pupils are active and also helps pupils to take responsibility for developing their own games and activities.
- Consistent behaviour management by adults ensures that those who find it difficult to manage their feelings are helped to get on with others. Pupils feel that behaviour is good and that there is no bullying of any kind. They told inspectors that any problems of any sort are dealt with quickly. Parents and staff agree with this view.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. They told how regular fire drills help them know what to do in an emergency.
- Attendance has been steadily rising and is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The clear focus of the executive headteacher, working alongside the head of school, has ensured that leaders and managers have identified the most important areas for improving the school further. This has built on developments already in place. As a result, progress is good and standards are rising as demonstrated in the improved results of the phonics screening check and end of Year 2 assessments. This demonstrates the school's capacity to make further improvements.
- Regular monitoring of teaching identifies where improvements are needed and also helps leaders identify skilled teachers in order to develop their leadership skills within the school. Alongside a thorough system of holding teachers to account through performance management, this ensures that teachers understand their responsibility for accelerating pupils' progress.

- Subject leaders and those with specific areas of responsibility have a good understanding of the progress that pupils make in their specific area and give strong leadership so that improvements can be made.
 - School self-evaluation is accurate, resulting in sharply focused school improvement plans to raise achievement further. Links with the junior school through the federation are strengthened through the development of a joint improvement plan, with the aim of securing a good transition for pupils from one school to the next.
 - Pupils love learning about a range of subjects and spoke with great enthusiasm about their space topic. They were able to quote Neil Armstrong's words as he stepped on the moon as well as talking of their enjoyment of the recent space station video recreating the song 'Space Oddity'. They were equally aware of how firebreaks were created to stop the Fire of London. Within the range of subjects studied they develop an excellent understanding of each other's heritages and of life in various parts of the world compared with theirs in Walsall.
 - The local authority gives light touch support to this good school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is knowledgeable and clearly committed to improving the school in conjunction with the federated junior school. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, ask searching questions of the school's leaders and scrutinise the records of pupils' achievement so that they know how well pupils are doing compared with the national averages. They know about the quality of teaching and understand the process of setting targets for teachers so that they can make sure that increases in pay and promotion are justified by pupils' achievement. They are well informed about how the pupil premium funding is used effectively to benefit targeted pupils. They ensure that the school is in a good financial position and that child protection procedures are exemplary.
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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	104231
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	413345

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dorothy Buchanan
Headteacher	Anthony Orlik
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2008
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