

# Brindley Heath Junior School

Enville Road, Kinver, Stourbridge, DY7 6AA

**Inspection dates** 11–12 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	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

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough over time to ensure pupils achieve well. Teachers do not always plan work or use resources or time well enough to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Writing tasks are sometimes not chosen carefully enough to provide stimulating opportunities for pupils to acquire and to practise a range of complex vocabulary and to develop greater independence in their learning. On a few occasions, pupils are not given enough good guidance to enable them to complete these tasks successfully.
- The marking of writing is not good enough to help pupils improve their work.
- Although senior leaders, including governors, are aware of some weaknesses in teaching, their checks on its overall quality are not rigorous enough to ensure training is fully effective in removing inconsistencies.
- Some leadership roles and responsibilities are not fully developed across the school. This limits the contribution leaders other than the executive headteacher make to checking up on the school's work and to improving its effectiveness.

### The school has the following strengths

- Attainment is rising. Pupils' progress is improving steadily, especially in mathematics. Gaps between different groups of pupils have reduced considerably.
- Pupils across the school make consistently good progress in reading.
- Pupils enjoy school, and their attendance is consistently above average. They feel safe and behave well in school.
- The executive headteacher has driven several recent improvements well. He enjoys the full confidence of parents, and staff morale is strong.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons taught by 12 teachers and/or teaching assistants. Two of these lessons were observed together with the executive headteacher and/or deputy headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' work from the previous school year were analysed. An inspector talked to a few pupils from Year 6 about their favourite authors and listened to them reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils and three governors. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority about the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 questionnaires completed by staff and the 61 responses by parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to the school's own recent survey of pupils' views were also considered. An inspector spoke informally to some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; the draft federation development plan; the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most primary schools.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. In this school, this extra government funding is currently received for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in the care of the local authority.
- 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 a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school was federated with its partner infant school in January 2013 under the leadership of the executive headteacher. The two schools share a governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good and helps pupils to make faster progress by ensuring teachers:
  - always plan work and use resources and time well to enable all pupils to learn at a fast rate
  - make good use of marking to help pupils improve their work.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing by ensuring teachers:
  - select imaginative tasks in lessons which challenge pupils and offer them scope to develop a wide range of descriptive, complex vocabulary and to work with greater independence
  - give consistently good guidance to pupils to help them to structure their work carefully.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring:
  - judgements on the overall quality of teaching are supported by a robust body of evidence to determine precisely training needs and to plan any necessary improvements
  - leadership roles are fully developed across the school so that leaders other than the executive headteacher can contribute more effectively to checking the school's effectiveness and to driving improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment when they join Year 3 is almost always well-above average. In 2012, the results of pupils in Year 6 were above average, but their starting points in Year 3 had also been above average. The proportion of pupils in this year group making and exceeding expected progress was similar to the national average. However, a few groups of pupils underachieved and girls made much better progress than boys, particularly in English.
- Unvalidated results for 2013 show a much more positive picture. Attainment was well-above average overall, especially in mathematics, where more-able pupils performed well, although girls continued to attain better than boys in English. Useful initiatives, such as booster groups and the formation of extra classes in Years 5 and 6, accelerated pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Not enough pupils in Years 3 to 5 have made good progress in mathematics, and in writing especially, over a sustained period of time. Some writing tasks in lessons are too mundane to spark pupils' imaginations or creativity and do not provide enough scope or challenge for pupils to develop their skills at a fast rate.
- Rates of progress across the school are improving steadily, especially in mathematics. Pupils' secure calculation skills enable them to tackle mini-challenges confidently and to work at a brisk pace.
- A few pupils who have special educational needs did not make enough progress in 2012 in English and pupils in Year 6 known to be eligible for the pupil premium also underachieved. Their attainment was lower than similar pupils nationally and much lower than that of other pupils in the year group, over four terms behind in English and six terms in mathematics. From their starting points, they made less progress than other pupils in both subjects.
- Gaps in achievement have now been reduced across the school. This is because vulnerable groups are now more sharply identified and, increasingly, purposeful use is being made of pupil premium funding to provide effective support for eligible pupils.
- Pupils make consistently good progress in reading. They enjoy reading at home, have a wide knowledge of the books of their favourite authors and appreciate their sense of humour. They identify and talk confidently about the stylistic features of the books which they find particularly appealing.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable, ranging from requires improvement to outstanding. Overall, teaching is less effective in English than in mathematics.
- In some English lessons, teachers do not make good use of what pupils know and can do to match work to meet the needs of all groups. Time is not used consistently well, and tasks are sometimes uninspiring or too limited to stimulate pupils' imagination or to extend their range of vocabulary and ideas. Opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills are sometimes restricted.
- In a few lessons, weaknesses in the explanation and practice of concepts prevent pupils from making clear contrasts between different styles of writing. On these occasions, several pupils are

unclear how to organise their ideas effectively or they use an unsuitable mixture of styles to express them.

- In less successful lessons, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs are not closely identified or provided with well-chosen resources to support their learning, and teaching assistants are not used well enough. However, these pupils usually make good progress in small-group work outside the classroom as staff make effective use of a range of strategies to tackle gaps in pupils' understanding of key concepts. This enables them to solve problems independently.
- Marking is regular and provides due praise, but offers less precise guidance in English than in mathematics to help pupils improve their work.
- Pupils develop their mathematical skills at a fast rate. Pupils acquire a secure command of basic calculation operations and the teachers' sharply timed, well-chosen tasks encourage pupils to work quickly, accurately and confidently. Work is closely matched to pupils' different abilities. Teaching assistants are deployed more effectively in mathematics lessons than in writing lessons to support pupils who need extra help.

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

- Pupils report that they enjoy school, including trips to historical sites and theme days. Attendance levels are consistently above average.
- Teachers capitalise effectively in most lessons on pupils' good attitudes to learning. Pupils usually enjoy sharing ideas in paired partner routines even when the work is mundane, as it sometimes is in writing lessons. In mathematics lessons, pupils are animated and respond eagerly to mini-challenges and short collaborative tasks.
- Pupils respect the school's code of conduct, value the privilege cards they receive for good behaviour and relate well to staff. They take responsibility for their actions and make the right choices. This was shown in a lesson where pupils were required to take on the roles of pupils from the Victorian era. Their readiness to enter into the spirit of the occasion added considerably to the success and pupils' enjoyment of the lesson.
- Pupils have few concerns about behaviour. They report that bullying rarely occurs and that any petty arguments which sometimes happen are resolved quickly. Exclusions are extremely rare and behaviour logs record few incidents. Pupils are well aware of self-help strategies to enable them to stay safe.
- Outside of lessons, for example in the playground or in the dining hall, relationships between pupils are very positive. Pupils and their parents appreciate the care provided by staff. All of the parents who completed the online questionnaire reported that their children feel safe and are well looked after in school.
- The school places a firm emphasis on promoting pupils' sense of responsibility in school, their identification with the school's aims, and values and tolerance of the views of others. Prefects in Year 6 take their roles seriously, supporting younger pupils well at break-times while other pupils contribute usefully to school life through the active school council and in the running of assemblies.
- Case studies show that the school works exceptionally well with external agencies to support the

various needs and well-being of individual pupils.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- While pupils' progress is improving steadily, senior leaders have not succeeded in achieving the target of 80% good teaching that they were set at the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders are aware of the inconsistencies in teaching, and have made a very recent staff appointment with a view to developing teaching. Their evaluation of its overall quality is over-optimistic, so they do not have a secure starting point for charting or measuring improvements in teachers' performance and, consequently, for ensuring that training is fully effective. Some written records of the school's work lack the detail or analysis necessary to ensure self-evaluation procedures drive improvements in this aspect quickly.
- Some responsibilities, for example for checking up on pupils' progress and the impact of measures taken, are not shared well enough to enable leaders other than the executive headteacher to exercise or to develop fully their leadership skills.
- The executive headteacher provides vigorous, effective leadership. Several of the staff who responded to the questionnaire commented very favourably on the renewed sense of direction he has brought to the school. Morale is good, and this, together with very effective measures taken to improve the curriculum and teaching in mathematics, underpin pupils' improving achievement.
- The achievement of different groups of pupils is tracked efficiently by the executive headteacher and, increasingly, good strategic use is being made of this information to ensure equality of opportunity.
- While the federation is still taking shape, several useful initiatives, such as team-building exercises and work shadowing, have been put in place to promote its prime aim of ensuring greater consistency in practice across the two schools. Parents feel that transition arrangements for pupils into Year 3 have improved considerably.
- The school fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, for example through the planned programme to increase pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures.
- Systems for safeguarding pupils are secure and thorough checks are made before new staff are recruited.
- The local authority has provided useful support in developing moderation procedures for pupils' work in mathematics. It has been less effective in challenging the robustness and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation.
- Recent funding for physical education has been targeted well at enhancing provision for games after school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors' reasons for seeking to federate the two schools are well argued and they are determined to ensure this new venture works well. They have a clear understanding of the areas for development in both schools. They know that school self-evaluation at Brindley Heath is not robust enough and that inconsistencies, particularly in teaching, still need to be

fully resolved to ensure performance management arrangements for teachers work well. They have based their targets for the headteacher's performance securely on fully closing the gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils.

- Governors monitor pupils' progress and have a secure overview of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievement at Brindley Heath. They know how and why pupil premium funding is being spent in particular ways and can point out where it is making a difference to outcomes for eligible pupils. They are increasingly developing their knowledge of both schools to enable them to hold senior leaders to account.

## 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>	124094
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426992

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Rumble (Acting)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jason Willetts (Executive headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 872343
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