

Burnwood Community Primary School

Chell Heath Road, Turnstall, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 7LP

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Over a long time standards reached by pupils were below those expected nationally.
- While some teaching is good or better, there is still too much variation in overall quality, including in the quality of marking.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are not as good as for reading. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are not developed sufficiently well.
- There is not yet consistent challenge to help the most-able pupils reach their full potential.
- Over the last two years there have been a series of initiatives aimed at raising standards but these have not always been fully put into practice by all staff. Consequently, they have not had the desired impact.
- The monitoring of pupils' work by senior leaders has been inconsistent.
- Although there is good expertise among senior leaders, the roles of subject leaders have not yet been fully developed.

The school has the following strengths

- As a result of much improved monitoring by the school, standards are starting to rise rapidly. Provisional 2013 national tests results are the best in the school's history.
- Pupils enjoy learning and are proud of their school, which means that they behave well and lessons can focus on learning.
- The appointment of a behaviour manager has now seen a dramatic fall in the number of fixed-term exclusions and instances of disruption.
- The additional funding made available for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in the care of the local authority has been used exceptionally well so that these pupils make excellent progress.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs receive effective help so that many are able to close the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils.
- Governors are proving effective in working closely with the school to drive forward the recent improvement that has been seen.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons and saw every teacher with their class.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils but throughout the inspection opportunities to talk to pupils in lessons and around the school were also taken. The quality of the work in pupils' books was examined and some pupils read to an inspector.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other school leaders, representatives from the governing body and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation was held with the School's Improvement Partner. The views of staff were gathered from their completed questionnaires and from conversations throughout the inspection.
- A total of 23 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, together with the responses to the school's own questionnaire returns, were taken into account in finding out the views of parents, as were the views expressed in a letter sent to the inspectors.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including information on the tracking and progress of pupils, teachers' planning and marking, the school's checks on how well it is doing and development plans and key policies and procedures including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marilyn Massey	Additional Inspector
Judith Tolley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion who are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils believed to be eligible for free school meals, or who are in the care of the local authority and for service children) is well above average.
- The proportion who are from minority ethnic groups, or who speak English as an additional language are both well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs who are supported through school action is above average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There is a separate pre-school provision at the school site but it is not managed by the school's governing body and has been inspected separately by Ofsted.
- At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher was on maternity leave and an acting deputy and an acting assistant headteacher were working with the headteacher to make up the senior leadership team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be consistently good or better, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring consistency in marking so that whenever possible it gives clear advice on how work could be improved
 - providing help and support to improve pupils' spelling, handwriting and punctuation
 - seeking more opportunities to develop pupils' skills in speaking and listening in lessons across all learning activities
 - ensuring that in mathematics work always builds on what pupils already know and understand
 - allowing the most effective teachers opportunities to model their skills for colleagues who are not yet so effective.
- Increase the level of pace and challenge to the most able to help them all to fulfil their potential by:
 - increasing teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve
 - ensuring work is matched to their ability and builds on what they already know so there is a greater challenge.
- Further develop the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - increasing the effectiveness of the monitoring of the quality of pupils' work
 - further developing the roles of the subject leaders
 - ensuring that all recent initiatives to raise pupils' outcomes are implemented equally effectively by all staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over a period of years the attainment of pupils fell well short of that expected. There is now evidence of rapidly rising standards but this has not yet been sustained over a long enough period. There remain weaknesses in important skills such as speaking and listening, writing and, in some classes, in mathematics that over time have held back pupils' progress. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and hearing pupils read confirm the better progress but also that more needs to be done to ensure consistently good progress for all pupils and subjects.
- There is still not enough challenge for the most-able pupils to allow them to reach their full potential. Sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations for these pupils. Where work is insufficiently matched to pupils' abilities and interests they are sometimes not given enough challenge to fulfil their potential.
- Mathematics does not always move learning forward. For example, work in books on a similar topic showed work becoming easier, rather than more challenging, over time. This means that students do not make the progress they should in these classes.
- When children enter Reception they have skills well below those typical for their age in all areas. Their progress is tracked carefully and it is clear that when they start Year 1 most have made good progress because of good teaching, although their skills are still below average.
- Since 2011, there has been rising attainment in every year group and pupils are now making much better progress in English and mathematics throughout the school, although it is stronger in some classes than others.
- In the national tests taken in July 2013, the as yet unpublished results of the oldest pupils reflected this rising trend. In reading, writing and mathematics virtually all pupils achieved or exceeded the expected standard. All had maintained or accelerated their levels of progress, which helped prepare them for the move to secondary school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are tracked with care and specific support put in place to address individual needs. This has been very effective and enables most to narrow the gap between their attainment and that of others.
- Much improved tracking now allows differences between identified groups to start to be tackled more effectively. For example, in Year 1 in 2012, the boys were falling behind in reading so they were given extra help and support to catch the girls. Pupils in identified groups are therefore making equal progress, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, or those who speak English as an additional language. This reflects the clear aim to provide equality of opportunity throughout the school. Slower progress by the most able means that this is not yet fully achieved.
- Reading is a strength and from the start the use of phonics (the understanding of letters and the sounds they make) helps pupils make good progress and enjoy reading.
- The pupil premium funding is used extremely effectively. It is used in a variety of ways that directly address identified needs, such as increasing classroom support to provide extra one-to-one support, or developing support for parents to help them give better support to their children. The school monitors the impact in detail which shows that by the time they leave those who receive it are outperforming other pupils in English and mathematics.
- Sporting achievement has always been valued and the introduction of the new national funding has been targeted carefully to raise participation and promote greater health and fitness.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is too great a range in the quality of teaching, while some is good or outstanding too much still requires improvement. There are insufficient opportunities for the most effective teachers to model their skills to support less effective colleagues. There is inconsistency,

especially in seeking to bring the quality of writing and mathematics up to that of reading.

- However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening in all areas of learning. These are weak from the start in Reception and in the past has been a major contributory factor in the overall low attainment levels as pupils moved through the school. Not enough has been done to accelerate progress from pupils' very low starting points.
- There remain instances where the level of challenge is not sufficient. Ineffective monitoring has meant that this has not always been picked up by the school's leadership, in mathematics, for example. This has an impact on the speed at which pupils are making progress.
- Work is marked regularly right through from Reception but it was clear from looking at pupils' books that there is too much inconsistency in how it is done. The school's expectations for marking are not always met, such as wherever possible providing supportive comments for how work might be improved. Teachers do not always support pupils to improve their skills in spelling, handwriting and punctuation.
- Currently, starting in Reception, the best teaching through the school reflects high expectations, with pupils being challenged through effective questioning and having many opportunities to be active learners. However, over time this was not always the case and still some lessons lack pace and challenge and here, there is significantly less learning.
- In classrooms the collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants is now good. They work together effectively and implement the system by which the pupils' learning is now so effectively monitored. In the best lessons this helps pupils to really enjoy their learning.
- This process of 'Assertive Mentoring' means that through very careful monitoring of the learning of new skills and understanding, the progress of every individual is tracked in detail. Teaching assistants work with pupils on strategies to ensure that any gaps are filled. The school believes this process is at the heart of its recent improvement, because teachers can see that pupils either understand their work or can see where help is needed. Inspectors agree.
- This strategy has raised the quality of teaching in English and mathematics, while topic work enhances the school's 'Creative Curriculum', giving pupils the opportunity to strengthen learning across a whole range of areas. In Year 5 and 6, for example, pupils were exploring different aspects about Australia and in the process were developing a range of skills. For example, Year 5 were seen using the internet to research some of the unique animals found, while Year 6 were working on time-lines of major events and figures, developing their historical skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There has been a big improvement in the quality of behaviour which has seen a dramatic reduction in pupils being excluded for fixed terms and in the amount of disruption in lessons over the last three years. This is another reason why pupils' learning is becoming much better. The appointment of a behaviour manager underpins this improvement, a really effective use of pupil premium funding.
- Many pupils enjoy their school and are proud to be a part of it. They told inspectors how much they like the wide range of clubs and activities that are on offer, including those that help them improve their learning skills. Attendance, which was low at one time, is now around average as pupils' attitudes have become more positive across the whole school.
- Pupils, staff and parents agree that the school is a safe place. While Parent View questionnaires reflected some feeling that bullying was not dealt with effectively the evidence suggests that the school does deal effectively with issues, which was also the view of pupils. Scrutiny of behavioural records confirmed this view.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and the risks arising from the misuse of social networking sites.
- The ways in which pupils help and care for each other are strengths of the school. There are many ways in which the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted, including opportunities to participate in a range of the arts, but this aspect of social responsibility

is perhaps the most impressive element.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is determined to ensure that the recent improvements in standards throughout the school are maintained and in this she is well supported by senior colleagues. Recent improvements need to be consolidated and more work needs to be done. However, governance is good and given the improving trend the school is well placed to improve further.
- The development of the roles of individual subject leaders has been quite recent and their roles are not yet fully developed.
- For example, the monitoring of pupils' work is not effective and while there are clear expectations, of how work should be assessed, for example, these are not always found in practice when looking at pupils' books. Over recent times a range of new initiatives has been introduced with the clear aim of raising standards. The monitoring of these has not always been as effective as it could have been in order to maximise the impact of these changes.
- The monitoring of teachers' performance is thorough, matching together evidence from lesson observations, lesson planning and the performance of pupils. Systems are thorough and support the professional development of all staff as well as helping the school to meet identified priorities. The school recognises that more needs to be done in order to attain consistently good teaching, particularly for writing and mathematics. For example, good practice is not disseminated widely enough to improve teaching further.
- Until recently, the school's checks on how well it is doing have not been rigorous enough. This is being rectified. The school's self-assessment is increasingly focused on raising standards and is enabling leaders to prioritise key elements for promoting school improvement.
- Staff show a strong commitment to the school and its pupils, reflected strongly in their questionnaire returns. They are committed to sustaining the school's improvement.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the links between performance and pay, and teachers on the upper pay scale willingly accept additional responsibilities.
- Developments in the Early Years Foundation Stage have seen solid improvement and there is a good balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities that sees pupils enjoying their learning and making positive strides forward. Overall, however, the curriculum needs to be developed further. There remains a lack of challenge for the most able, while the quality of provision for writing and mathematics is still not maximising the pupils' talents, so they lag behind the standards seen in reading.
- The local authority, in acknowledging the improvements that have been introduced, has reduced its role to 'light touch'. It has given positive help in helping the school get to this point, especially in funding the 'Assertive Mentoring' programme, in return for which the school now models its good practice to other schools throughout the authority. This reflects that this is an improving school. Several aspects of leadership and management are on the cusp of being good but the improvement in teaching and pupils' progress need to be further accelerated for leaders' and managers' effectiveness to be fully demonstrated.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is working side by side with the school in its commitment to raise standards. There is now a good range of expertise that enables it to support and challenge in equal measure, so it has increased its effectiveness. Individual governors are linked to specific areas of the school, developing awareness of the quality of teaching and learning. They are keen to sustain the recent improvements. Challenging objectives are set annually for the headteacher and governors are also aware of the arrangements for the pay of staff, understanding the link between pay and performance. As part of the process of school improvement they have been actively involved in the process for tackling underperformance. The school's finance manager is a member of the governing body, his work being closely monitored by the finance committee, including monitoring the allocation and impact of the pupil premium. All statutory responsibilities are carried out in full, including safeguarding.

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	124221
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	426999

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Smith
Headteacher	Diane Herbert
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2012
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