

The Gates Primary School

Bristle Hall Way, Westhoughton, Bolton, Lancashire, BL5 3QA

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils' achievement is good overall and is outstanding in writing. This is because of the successful focus on improving standards in recent years.
- The quality of teaching is good with some that is now outstanding. As a result, pupils make good progress during their time at the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe. They are considerate and behave well in lessons and around the school. Rare incidents of challenging behaviour are managed well by staff, who understand the needs of all pupils.
- Since the last inspection, standards have improved and are continuing to rise.
- Attendance has improved and is now above the national average.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve further. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior leaders are extremely robust and thorough. As a result, teaching and pupils' achievement has improved.
- An informed governing body provides good challenge and professional support to help the school improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching requires improvement and there is not enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make outstanding progress overall.
- Pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics is not as good as it is in writing.
- Subject leaders do not regularly check the progress of different groups of pupils in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, two of which were joint observations, one with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and with different groups of people involved in the school. These included pupils, parents, members of the governing body, members of the teaching staff and a representative with the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account 37 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the results of the school's recent parent surveys.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including plans for improvement, records of the school's checks on pupils' and teachers' performance, safeguarding and attendance documents, minutes of meeting of the governing body and school policies.

Inspection team

Faheem Chisti, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jennifer Platt	Additional Inspector
Andrew Morley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Gates Primary is a larger than average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, is average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2012, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- Up to 40% of children leave the school after they have completed the Nursery Year. About half of the children in Reception have not attended the school during the Nursery Year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the already good quality teaching to outstanding by:
 - setting work that challenges all pupils to achieve their best in every lesson
 - ensuring that all pupils persevere with tasks when they are working on their own.
- Ensure that pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is improved to that seen in their writing by:
 - ensuring that teachers' marking in mathematics is of the same high standard as that seen in other subjects so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve
 - providing reading activities which always challenge all groups of pupils, particularly those capable of reaching the higher levels of attainment, and that motivate the boys
 - providing more time for pupils to practise their reading skills when they complete work in other curriculum subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders by ensuring that they check regularly and robustly how well different groups of pupils are progressing in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children join the Nursery, they demonstrate levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical of those expected nationally. Children in the Nursery make good progress. They develop good communication and language skills because of a well-planned and organised environment and good teaching. Many children who enter the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception Year do so with skills below those expected of their age but they too make good progress from their starting points. Children are well-prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Between Years 1 and 6 pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are on a rising trend. In Year 6 in 2012, an above average proportion of pupils reached the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics. Furthermore, a much higher than average proportion of pupils reached the higher Level 5. This is because the most-able pupils usually make good progress. School data and inspection evidence show that in Year 6 in 2013, attainment has been sustained and is set to improve further this year.
- In writing, attainment by Year 6 is well above average. Pupils' achievement in writing has been outstanding over the past two years. A particularly strong focus on extending writing skills following the previous inspection report means that pupils are now very confident in writing at length, in different styles and for different audiences.
- Pupils' achievement in reading has improved and is now good. Results of the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check in 2012, for example, were well below national expectations. As a result of professional development, such as staff training and a more focused approach to the teaching of phonics, 2013 results show significant improvement and are now closer to national expectations. Older pupils enjoy reading and read widely at home and in school. Their attainment by Year 6 is rising. However, fewer pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in reading than do so in writing. Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practise their reading skills when they complete work as part of other curriculum subjects. Occasionally, boys do not make as much progress in lessons as the girls do because work is not always matched to their specific needs.
- In mathematics, progress is now good and standards by Year 6 are now above average. Pupils now have secure calculation skills. Their problem-solving and investigational skills are now improving at a good rate. Their achievement in mathematics however is still sometimes held back because they are not clear about what they need to do to improve. Teachers' marking is not as good in mathematics as it is in other subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support so that they make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who are supported through the pupil premium funding achieve well. The funding is spent well to ensure that their needs are met. In 2012, all pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal in Year 6 attained Level 4 in English and mathematics. This is higher than the proportion of similar pupils that do so nationally. School data and inspection evidence show that across the school eligible pupils make similar good progress to that of their classmates. This demonstrates that the school successfully promotes equality of opportunity for its pupils.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The majority of lessons observed by the inspectors were of a good quality with a small proportion that was outstanding. Scrutiny of workbooks and the school's own monitoring of teaching confirm that teaching over time is good.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and an acute understanding of the needs of their pupils, ensure that lessons are well-planned and meet the needs of all pupils. In an outstanding Years 3/4 literacy lesson, pupils were enthused with a love for learning as a result of a high paced, exciting lesson in a jungle themed classroom. Effective role modelling and excellent subject

knowledge ensured that all pupils made rapid progress.

- Teachers have high expectations and the quality and presentation of pupils' work is of a high standard. They expect pupils to do their best and challenge them to do so. However, not all pupils persevere with tasks when working on their own. This occasionally slows their learning.
- Good knowledge of how young children learn is clear in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children enjoy a wide range of imaginative resources and are able to adapt their structured play accordingly. For example, two boys worked together on making model cakes and then transformed these into model cities. Children in the Nursery develop good communication and language skills as a result of a well-planned and organised environment. They are clear about their tasks and are able to focus on activities for lengthy periods of time.
- Teaching of writing is a particular strength. Pupils are given ample opportunities to write for different purposes. Pupils are involved fully in checking the quality of their own work and that of their classmates. Their written work is marked regularly and to a high standard. However, this is not always the case, in the marking of mathematics work, where teachers' comments do not always show pupils the next steps in their learning in order to improve their work.
- Relationships between adults, parents and pupils are excellent. In the best lessons, pupils are given work that gets the most out of them. Pupils are clear how they can be successful in their learning because teachers carefully check on their understanding.
- Although reading is taught well, pupils' achievement is occasionally held back. This is because some of the most-able pupils are not always given challenging enough work. In classes where there is a large majority of boys, reading activities do not always motivate them. Opportunities to develop pupils' reading skills are occasionally missed because they do not always have enough chances to practise their skills.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good because all adults and particularly skilled teaching assistants ensure that pupils receive support which is well-matched to their needs.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire is of the opinion that the quality of teaching is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around school. In the vast majority of lessons, their attitudes to learning are good and they participate well in lessons. They say that they enjoy lessons and feel well cared for and safe.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including those through the Internet and cyber-bullying.
- Pupils take on roles and responsibilities around the school, such as play leaders who help younger children with newly designed games, or helping to care for chickens and guinea pigs that live on the school grounds, including collecting recently laid eggs.
- Teachers are adept at ensuring that pupils have high standards of behaviour, but sometimes their behaviour is not always of such a high standard when they are not in the presence of their usual teachers.
- Parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire and those that met with inspectors expressed positive views about pupils' behaviour and safety.
- Since the previous inspection, attendance has improved and is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team provides clear and purposeful leadership and staff have clear roles and expectations. They have successfully improved the school since the previous inspection. Teaching is now good and some is outstanding. Pupils now make good progress and standards are on a rising trend.

- The leadership of teaching is strong. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher and senior leaders are extremely robust and thorough. They provide effective feedback to teachers about how their practice can be improved. They ensure that staff are clear about the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Performance management arrangements are linked appropriately to pupils' progress and pay progression. Teachers do not pass the pay threshold until their teaching is shown to be effective at securing good rates of progress for the pupils they teach.
- A continuous drive to improve teaching through high quality professional development helps teaching staff to improve their work even further, for example, through the use of 'groups of threes' – an example of teachers learning together in threes to improve each other's performances.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher carefully and accurately track pupils' progress, including that of different groups of pupils. From these, they can see the impact of specific measures and support in improving progress and where further improvements are needed. Subject leaders, however, are not yet as adept at using data and their skills in monitoring the progress of different groups of pupils in their subject areas are still developing.
- A rich curriculum has a range of links to different subjects, is meaningful and exciting for children, although it is lacking in cross-cultural links with societies other than White British.
- The school has benefited greatly from support offered by the local authority enabling the school to obtain advice and training at an early stage, but allowing time to implement and embed good practice independently.
- The new primary school sports funding is being used to provide specialists sports coaches to deliver physical education lessons alongside school staff, to enable regular competition with other local schools and to provide extra sports equipment in school. Pupils and staff benefit from the extra professional development offered by specialist coaches extending the skills of class teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is clear about the strengths of the school and is effectively addressing areas for improvement. Governors are made up of expert professionals and education professionals and so have very good subject specific knowledge enabling the school to benefit from their advice and support. Governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher and other senior leaders to ensure good financial and legal management. They are developing their role of challenging the school regarding the attainment and progress of pupils and the quality of teaching. They make appropriate use of data to plan the use of funding such as the pupil premium or sports funding.

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	133926
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	426171

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindy Griffiths
Headteacher	Kathryn Coiffait
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2011
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