

Bignold Primary School

Wessex Street, Norwich, NR2 2SY

Inspection dates

3–4 October 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Standards in English and mathematics in Year 6 were low in 2012. They quickly improved from this low base under the new headteacher and in 2013 they were much closer to the national average, but still not as high as they could be.
- Until recently, pupils have not made sufficient progress in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Pupils' understanding of phonics (the sounds letters make) is not strong enough to ensure they can spell as accurately as they should.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use their mathematics skills in investigative activities.
- Teachers do not use class topics to develop pupils' ability to write in different styles sufficiently. This limits progress in writing.
- Although there is some good and outstanding teaching, this is not consistently present across the school. Some teachers do not set work that is hard enough for all pupils and do not make good use of time in lessons.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher provides dedicated and determined leadership. She has formed a strong leadership team that is making a significant difference to teaching standards and pupils' progress in all classes.
- The quality of teaching is improving very quickly because leaders and managers base their judgements about the quality of teaching on how well pupils are achieving, and provide good support to help teachers improve.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well, are keen to learn and are kept safe.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress because teaching is consistently at least good and often better.
- The governing body provides good challenge and support to the headteacher.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium now make the same progress as their classmates in all year groups.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 29 lessons, of which 16 were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 1 and Year 6, and observed the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, subject leaders, a representative from the local authority, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- Inspectors considered 59 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day to gather their views about the school. The team also considered 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' books with the headteacher as well as looking at pupils' work in all classrooms.
- A number of documents were looked at, including the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, school improvement plans, records of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding files, data on pupils' current progress, and information on the management of teachers' performance and the monitoring of teaching.

Inspection team

Emily Simpson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Geof Timms	Additional Inspector
Stephen Palmer	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average primary school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs are broadly average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which at this school provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- An above-average proportion of pupils join partway through the school year.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so it is consistently good or better, by ensuring that:
 - activities are matched to pupils' needs and are always hard enough to extend pupils' understanding, especially in the case of more able pupils
 - lessons proceed at a good pace and no teaching time is wasted
 - teachers demonstrate consistently high expectations about what pupils can achieve and place greater emphasis on pupils working by themselves and completing tasks unprompted
 - the good and outstanding practice that now exists in several classes is shared with all teachers and embedded across the school.
- Accelerate progress and improve standards in English and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their addition, subtraction, multiplication and division skills in mathematical investigations
 - develop pupils' ability to use different styles of writing by making better use of 'topics' taught in other school subjects
 - improving the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and spelling so pupils learn to spell correctly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement, especially in writing, where pupils make less progress than in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Too few pupils reach the higher levels in writing.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been too low. In 2012 pupils were two terms behind levels expected nationally in English and mathematics. The 2013 results show pupils are now learning at a faster rate, and the results were only just below those found nationally due to improved teaching and leadership.
- In recent years pupils have not made as much progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout Key Stage 2 as they should have. Since the arrival of the new headteacher most pupils have begun learning at a faster rate because teachers have been shown how to use information on how well pupils are doing to help them learn more quickly. Many are now making better than expected progress but this is not consistently the case across the school, and progress remains slower in Year 4 than it needs to be.
- Pupils in Year 1 achieved low scores in the 2012 phonics screening check (a check to see if pupils understand the link between letters and the sounds they make). The 2013 results were much higher. However, pupils in both key stages continue to struggle to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them spell words accurately. This limits the confidence of some older pupils when writing at length.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen for the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils now reach levels above those found nationally.
- Children enter Early Years Foundation Stage with skills expected for their age. They make good progress due to good teaching and carefully planned activities in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The school has a large number of pupils who join during the school year, many of whom speak English as an additional language or start at the school speaking no English at all. School information on the progress of this group shows they make as much progress in mathematics as their classmates. They are slower to make progress in reading and writing but are quick to catch up once they have learned to speak English.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium are keen to improve and now make the same progress as their classmates in English and mathematics. The funding has been used expressly to reduce the size of their teaching groups and to provide additional adult support in classes. This has enabled this group to close the gap in attainment compared to other groups, and eligible pupils currently in the school are now attaining similar levels to their classmates in English and mathematics.
- In the past, pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs have not always made as much progress as similar pupils nationally. Careful checking of these pupils' achievement by the leader responsible for special educational needs has helped most teachers to improve the level at which work is set so that it meets the needs of pupils in this group, and they are now making quicker progress, especially in Year 6.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although leaders and managers have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching, overall it requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good in all classes. Not all teachers share the same high expectation of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve.
- Not all teachers insist on pupils working hard enough by providing them with enough activities to complete by themselves, without help, and thereby demonstrate what they have learned. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson the teacher provided only one question to pupils, and they could not move on until she checked their work. She was unable to do this quickly enough so many pupils could not make further progress in their learning.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems and carry out investigations. They therefore do not think as deeply as they could in mathematics.
- In English teachers do not always plan good links between the introductory activity and the style of writing pupils will be learning about. In Year 3 pupils attempted to write 'acrostic' poems about an open-top bus tour of Norwich. The poems limited the descriptive vocabulary pupils could use to express their enjoyment of the visit, so they made limited progress in their writing.
- As a result of the direction provided by the headteacher, good and improving teaching is occurring much more frequently across the school. Activities in Nursery and Reception cover all areas of learning effectively, with a particular emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills. Children enjoy their activities and work well with adults and other children.
- Teachers work very closely with parents to share information and this helps them to plan the best learning for each individual child. In mathematics lessons pupils are taught the basic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division well. Teachers provide clear explanations and pupils are able to calculate using a variety of methods.
- In the best literacy lessons teachers encourage pupils to discuss their ideas with each other. Year 5 classes studying *Goodnight Mr Tom* compared a scene from the book with the same scene in the film; pupils were enthused as they discussed how the filmmakers had used dramatic effects to add to the story. Interesting activities provided by the teachers meant pupils were excited to learn and made excellent progress.
- Marking is generally good. Clear comments written in pupils' books show them how to improve. Pupils' books show that they use these comments to make their work better and this is helping them to make faster progress in their learning.
- Where teachers plan interesting practical activities that allow pupils to work by themselves, they make good progress. In design and technology Year 4 were constructing miniature fairground rides. The teacher planned links between scientific knowledge of electricity and an art study of fairgrounds to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils' excellent attitudes and awareness of safety helped them to support each other in their learning.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively, understand their role and provide good support for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs; consequently, their progress is improving. They support pupils well at all times in lessons, ensuring their support is focused and unobtrusive so that they do not detract attention from the teacher during parts of lessons when the whole class is learning together.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They are polite and courteous to each other and to adults, and friendly to visitors. They are rightly proud of their school and enjoy coming every day.
- In lessons pupils are eager to learn. They have these positive attitudes even in classes where teaching requires improvement. This is because leaders and managers have successfully promoted good learning attitudes during lessons, as well as through whole-school assemblies and the well-planned system of rewards given to pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is at its very best when they are given practical yet demanding work to complete. They support each other well and make good progress in their learning.
- Leaders and managers have worked hard to improve pupils' attendance and it has risen significantly over a three-year period to reach the national average. There has been a drastic reduction in the number of pupils who are away from school for long periods. Pupils are thrilled if their class receives the 'Be There Badger' mascot in assembly because they have the highest attendance of the week.
- Pupils of different ages play well together at playtime and lunchtime. They have a good range of outdoor equipment to use at lunchtime, including an adventure playground and large school field.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe when using the internet. The school has 'e-safety' as an area of its improvement plan so that it frequently reviews how it promotes online safety. Pupils are also taught how to keep safe in other situations, for example when crossing the road.
- Some pupils find it difficult to settle comfortably into school life and can find daily routines challenging. These pupils are very well supported because staff have an excellent knowledge of their pupils as individuals, use teaching assistants to support them and make sure all specific needs are provided for.
- School records show there is very little serious misbehaviour or incidence of racism in school. This is verified by pupils, parents and staff. Records show that the very few incidents of poor behaviour that have occurred in recent years have been quickly and appropriately dealt with.

The leadership and management are good

- Although she has only been in post for a year, the headteacher has significantly improved the school through her determination and ambition. Staff have embraced her leadership and share her vision that the pupils at Bignold deserve, and can achieve, the very best. The impact of her leadership is evident in the rapid improvements in pupils' progress. The school has strong capacity to secure further improvement.
- The headteacher constantly encourages teachers to be the best they can. She has set clear targets for teachers to improve their work and provided excellent training opportunities to support them. As a result, though pockets of weaker teaching remain, practice is improving. Responses to the staff questionnaire show morale is high and staff enjoy working alongside their leaders and managers.
- The leaders responsible for English, mathematics and special educational needs work closely

with the headteacher to use information about how well pupils are doing to set further targets for improvement within their areas.

- Leaders and managers have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have clear plans for its next steps. These plans are frequently reviewed. Plans from last year were successful in helping improve teaching, resulting in pupils learning more quickly.
- The school ensures there is no discrimination. It is working extremely hard, and with increasing success, to enable all pupils to enjoy the same opportunities. It has been successful in closing the gap between the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium and their classmates.
- Aspects of the links between topic work and support for pupils' literacy require improvement. However, the curriculum has been substantially revised so that it increasingly holds pupils' interest, ensures they are keen to learn and excites their imagination. Good use is made of outside visits and visitors. The school is using additional government funding for teaching physical education (PE) as part of the Olympic legacy to employ specialist PE teachers to lead a weekly session for all pupils so that other teachers can develop their skills in teaching PE.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school. The headteacher has invited frequent visits from the local authority which have contributed to the rising standards. The school is recognised as being responsive to new ideas and is now linked with a London leadership scheme to further develop the role of senior leaders.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Weekly 'Stay and Play' sessions in the Reception classes have at least 50% parental attendance each week and provide an excellent start to the strong relationship between home and school. Parents express confidence in the leadership of the school and appreciate the invitation to the annual 'Visioning Evening' where the headteacher shares the school's successes and priorities for improvement with the parents.
- Pupils are given a wide range of school visits to support their learning in the classroom. They enjoy these and the experiences help them make better progress. Leaders and managers are developing ways to link different school subjects together to help pupils make accelerated progress. These experiences contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the appointment of the current headteacher the governing body has reorganised into a much smaller and more purposeful body. It has attended extensive training provided by the local authority and now provides effective challenge and support to school leaders. Governors use information on pupils' progress and attainment to check their performance compared to other schools. They make sure finances are used to support pupils' learning effectively. They know how pupil premium money is being spent and know how it is raising standards. The governing body uses information about teaching quality to make decisions about staffing and staff training, and making sure that pay is linked to performance. It has undertaken training for the safer recruitment of staff, and all health and safety procedures are checked regularly. It has ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements.

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	134955
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	425309

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	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Brookes
Headteacher	Clare Cook
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2011
Telephone number	01603 625721
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