

John Bunyan Junior School

Lancaster Way, Braintree, CM7 5UL

Inspection dates

17–18 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders and governors have not acted decisively enough to bring lasting improvement to teaching and the pupils' attainment.
- Leaders do not have a clear understanding of how effective the school is. As a result, they do not identify precisely what is needed to bring about improvement.
- The governing body does not ask school leaders searching enough questions about the quality of teaching and the impact it is having on pupils' progress.
- Pupils make inadequate progress because not all teachers have high enough expectations of what they can achieve.
- There is not enough good-quality teaching in the school to act as a model for teachers to learn from and so improve their practice.
- Teaching often fails to capture the pupils' imaginations and they quickly lose interest. On these occasions, pupils do not put in sufficient effort.
- Pupils do not know how well they are doing and what they should be aiming for because marking does not give them clear guidance about how to improve their work and push on to higher levels.

The school has the following strengths

- The school takes great care to support the social and emotional development of pupils whose circumstances might make them more vulnerable.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school has improved considerably. Pupils also say how safe they feel in school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons, four of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body, including the Chair, and a representative from the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) and so inspectors took into account the results of a survey undertaken by the school in October 2012 to which over 50 parents and carers responded.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mark Jones	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- The school is average in size, although pupil numbers have risen sharply over the last 12 months.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school receives pupil premium funding for just over half the pupils. This is extra money given to schools for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from armed service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average.
- Many more pupils than in most other schools join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- Four of the eight classes are taught by teachers new to the school this term.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that pupils make good progress by ensuring that:
 - every teacher has high expectations of each pupil and uses methods that hold their attention
 - assessment data are used more effectively to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils, including the more able and those who have special educational needs
 - teaching assistants are deployed so they contribute to learning throughout each lesson
 - individual targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics, and that these are frequently reviewed and used to plan the next steps in learning
 - teachers give pupils clear points on how to improve when they mark their work and check that these have been adopted.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - introducing more rigorous procedures for evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' performance and developing a coordinated approach to improving teaching
 - managing the performance of all staff more rigorously by setting individual targets for teachers which are tightly linked to pupils' progress
 - sharpening self-evaluation so that it provides a frequent and accurate analysis of performance
 - ensuring that improvement plans include challenging targets that are about raising pupils' achievement
 - undertaking an external review of the role of the governing body, to ensure that governors do more to challenge senior leaders over the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement is inadequate because of weaknesses in teaching. These have led to pupils making only slow progress from their starting points at whatever time they enter the school. As a result, attainment is well below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The pattern of improving test results at the end of Year 6 over the previous two years was not sustained in 2013, when they fell back to being well below average. Too few pupils made the progress expected of them while at the school, as had also been the case previously. The proportion reaching the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics was well below the national average. This meant that many pupils were not fully prepared to do well at secondary school.
- The school has not put in place a sufficiently robust programme to develop the pupils' skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling. One consequence is that the attainment of Year 6 pupils in the test covering these skills in 2013 was lower than in reading, writing and mathematics.
- More-able pupils are not being sufficiently stretched and so relatively few are working at higher levels in each year group. Several who join the school at levels above that expected for their age do not sustain this advantage and fall back, particularly in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make inadequate progress in all subjects, but particularly in mathematics. This is because teachers do not plan lessons carefully enough to meet their identified learning needs, and catch-up programmes in mathematics are not effective.
- Physical education lessons, including swimming lessons in the school pool, support the pupils' healthy lifestyles. The school is planning to use new funding to support the training of teachers alongside providing more competitive sport for pupils.
- The wide gap between the attainment of those eligible for support through the pupil premium and others seen in Year 6 test results for English and mathematics in 2012 has been eliminated across the school. This is because these pupils make slightly better progress than others through individual tuition and working in small booster groups.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- The main weakness in teaching is that many lessons do not inspire the pupils or gain and hold their attention. There are too few opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities and the use of resources. As a result, some lose concentration and are not sufficiently engaged in lessons.
- Teachers do not use the assessment information available to them well enough to adapt their teaching and the activities they provide to meet the pupils' differing needs. This particularly slows the learning of the more able, who are not sufficiently challenged. When pupils work in mixed-ability groups, the aim is often to pull up the weaker, not to stretch the more able. However, this does not aid the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as work is not always suitably adapted for them.
- Teachers do not always deploy support staff so that they can make a significant contribution to

learning. They do not identify their role sufficiently in lesson planning or brief them carefully enough about who they are to support and how. Their contribution is particularly limited during periods when the teacher is talking to the whole class, as they often sit listening and do not support pupils' learning.

- Marking is neither consistent nor thorough enough to help pupils improve their work. Little guidance is offered on the steps they can take to meet their targets. These targets are often vague and do not help them aim for higher attainment. Furthermore, teachers do not take the next steps in each pupil's learning into account enough when planning their lessons. There are, however, some examples of effective guidance being provided for pupils through marking with evidence that pupils have followed through with their teachers' suggestions.
- In the more successful lessons, teachers use questions well to check the pupils' understanding, either when teaching the whole class or working with small groups. On these occasions, teaching assistants make a significant contribution through their timely interventions that skilfully move learning forward for individuals.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Most pupils work hard, are attentive and respond quickly to their teachers. However, when teaching is not inspiring, some pupils do not give of their best and put in sufficient effort.
- A very small number of pupils have not developed skills needed for them to collaborate constructively with others by sharing tasks and ideas through discussion.
- Pupils, staff, parents and regular visitors to the school say how much behaviour has improved over the last few years. This has helped to generate a calm and harmonious atmosphere within the buildings and outside on the playground.
- Pupils are generally polite and well mannered. They show care and respect for others and help newly arrived pupils to settle in quickly and make new friends. They take pride in their responsibilities as school council representatives, house captains and lunchtime play-leaders.
- Attendance has steadily improved, although a small number of pupils have high levels of absence which the school is continually seeking to reduce by working closely with the families concerned. The school is working with determination and some success to improve punctuality through its 'Early Bird' weeks.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They are taught how to cope with risky situations and to use computers and mobile phone technology sensibly. Incidents of poor behaviour have reduced and pupils say that, while there are some rare occurrences of bullying, the headteacher deals with them swiftly and constructively.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- Leaders and governors have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about the sustained and rapid improvements needed, particularly in teaching, to raise the pupils' achievement. Where improvements have been made, these were too fragile and teaching has not consistently reached a good level in enough lessons. Subject leaders have received training to enable them to fulfil their role but have yet to make a significant impact on improvements in their areas.

- Self-evaluation is not accurate and sharp enough for leaders and governors to have a clear picture of the school's strengths and the priorities to be tackled in order to secure improvement. Until recently, the actions planned to bring about improvement have not been focused enough on challenging targets for the pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not been successful in securing consistently good teaching across the school, although to tackle this, teachers visit and work alongside experts in other schools. Changes of teaching staff have not helped. Assessment data and work in pupils' books show that teaching has not been consistently of a good-enough quality in the past. Formal procedures for managing the performance of staff have not been effective enough in ensuring that everyone is focused on increasing the progress made by pupils.
- The school's engagement with the local authority has been light-touch in the recent past. This has not enabled the school to sustain any progress made. Similarly, working with the local partnership of schools has not led to lasting improvements.
- The school's drive to ensure equality of opportunity meets with mixed success. Although there is no significant gap between the achievement of different groups of pupils, this is because no group is being particularly successful. The one success has been in raising the achievement of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- Topic themes link learning between subjects and add some interest for the pupils. There are examples of these topics being used well to promote writing and the pupils' application of mathematics, although this is far from consistent across the school. Aspects of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have not always received sufficient attention, although pupils develop a reasonably wide understanding of different faiths and cultures through assemblies.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers. An inspector responsible for monitoring the progress of the school will review this situation.
- The school understands where the circumstances of its pupils might make them more vulnerable and puts in support where needed for an individual's emotional and social development. Close links with the infant school smooth the pupils' transfer and help to build on the already established partnership with parents.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - By their own admission, governors have not challenged the school sufficiently about the quality of teaching and its impact on the pupils' progress. Training has given them a greater understanding of assessment data but they have not used this rigorously to make sure that the targets they set the school are achieved. They are aware of where improvements were made to teaching but not the reasons why this was still not leading to better progress. Governors check financial matters carefully and are fully aware of the allocation of pupil premium funding and its impact on the attainment of eligible pupils. They also make sure that safeguarding procedures are implemented rigorously. However, they have not established a link between teachers' pay and the progress of their pupils.

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	115007
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	425227

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Veronica Clark
Headteacher	Amanda Woolmer
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2011
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