

Belbroughton CofE Primary School

Bradford Lane, Belbroughton, Stourbridge, DY9 9TF

Inspection dates 10–11 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make enough progress in writing.
- Teachers do not consistently expect pupils to write enough in lessons other than English.
- Worksheets contain errors in spelling and punctuation.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently correct pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils are not given time to carry out corrections.
- The school's leaders do not ensure that policies for promoting literacy skills are implemented by all staff.
- The school development plan is not sharply focused on improving standards in writing and has no measures by which the success of actions can be measured.
- The effective work of the headteacher in improving teaching has accelerated pupils' progress but has not yet had time to have an impact on standards in writing.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and governors has eliminated inadequate teaching and reversed the trend of falling achievement.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, where teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, as do children in the Reception year.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Around the school their behaviour is often exemplary.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, including five that were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. A representative of the local authority was interviewed over the telephone.
- The inspector took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He also met parents informally during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools. The number of children attending the school has fallen since 2012 as the school no longer has its own nursery.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action has fallen significantly since the previous inspection and is now very low. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Very few pupils receive support through the pupil premium. This is additional funding for specific groups of pupils, such as children looked after by the local authority and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A new headteacher joined the school in January 2012. Four teachers have left the school since that time and have been replaced by four others.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of writing and accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring teachers consistently:
 - provide pupils with more opportunities to write in subjects other than English
 - correct common errors in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar and give them time to carry out the corrections and learn from their mistakes
 - provide pupils with the best possible models of how to spell and punctuate correctly.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring:
 - priorities are sharply focused on improving writing and include criteria in action plans by which the success of actions can be measured
 - policies and procedures for teaching and marking writing are implemented consistently by all teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards have fallen significantly since 2010, when they were well above average by the end of Year 6. Since that time, children have entered the school with knowledge and skills expected for their age, made expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and left with broadly average standards.
- The proportions of pupils making expected progress fell in 2012; they were in the bottom 40% of schools nationally in reading and writing, but in the top 40% in mathematics. The proportions of pupils making more than the expected progress were below average in all three subjects.
- Achievement improved in 2013; it was good in mathematics and reading at the ends of Key Stages 1 and 2, but progress in writing still requires improvement at both key stages, where standards remain broadly average.
- Almost all pupils made at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but the proportion exceeding expected progress in writing was average and lower than in the other two subjects.
- Pupils make too many basic errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar, which prevent them making good progress in writing. They work hard at their writing in lessons, and think deeply about the content. This often reflects their well-developed understanding of how others feel, such as when writing about the impact of a tsunami.
- Pupils' good progress in reading and mathematics is evident in the improved results in 2013. All pupils passed the early reading check in Year 1, and results in reading and mathematics in Year 2 were above average. Results also improved to above average in Year 6 as higher proportions made more than the expected progress.
- Pupils read widely and well. The most able pupils in Year 2 enjoyed getting to grips with 'The Secret Garden' and pupils in Year 6 are well informed about current affairs through reading children's newspapers. Pupils persevere well when faced with difficult mathematical problems, such as working out how many lines of symmetry there are in a circle in Year 2.
- Progress in the Reception year has also improved and is now good. Children now start Year 1 with standards that are above average for their age in reading, writing, number work and in their personal development.
- The assessment of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has been completely overhauled since the previous inspection. The headteacher found that many pupils labelled as having special educational needs had simply not been taught well enough in the past and had no barriers to making good progress.
- The reduced numbers of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs means that resources can be targeted more precisely and intensively at those who need extra support, so they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to support the very few pupils who are eligible for such support. Leaders have drawn up plans for how additional sports funding will be used to improve pupils' physical performance and well-being.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teachers do not pay close enough attention to improving pupils' writing for them to make good progress. Worksheets sometimes contain errors in spelling and punctuation, such as 'meter' instead of 'metre'.
- Teachers do not mark pupils' written work consistently to correct errors in spelling punctuation and grammar. Capital letters are used incorrectly and common words such as 'out', that should be routinely spelt accurately, are not always spelt correctly. Such errors are not always identified by teachers, and where they are identified, pupils are not always given the time to correct them.
- Teachers do not expect pupils to write enough in lessons. They rarely make notes about what the teacher is saying or to summarise the thoughts of a discussion group, for example.
- There are very large differences in the amounts of written work produced by different classes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, have only completed a few pages of writing in all their science and topic lessons combined since the start of September, whereas pupils in Year 6 have produced many more.
- In contrast, teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to read in lessons. They routinely expect pupils to read aloud to the class, and others listen closely and wait patiently if a less-able pupil struggles with a difficult new word. The reading books given to pupils are carefully matched to their abilities so that they quickly learn new vocabulary, with a strong emphasis on learning about different cultures, especially in Year 4.
- Teachers expect pupils to produce a lot of work in their mathematics lessons. The tasks are demanding and make pupils think hard. Pupils work is marked accurately and pupils always respond by doing their corrections, so they learn from their mistakes.
- Children make good progress in the Reception year because they learn rapidly in lessons where they choose and plan their own activities. The adults take these opportunities to question children about what they are doing and help them build on what they already know and can do. Children had constructed a harbour, for example, and the teacher developed their number skills by asking questions such as 'how many gates need to be opened to let the boat out?' and 'how many more would we need to open for the bigger boat? How many is that altogether?'
- Throughout the school, teaching assistants provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They only intervene when pupils need a gentle prompt and help pupils think for themselves.

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

- Pupils come to school ready to learn. They quickly settle to work and usually try their best for the full duration of a lesson.
- Behaviour at breaks and around school is outstanding. Pupils are very well-mannered, polite and care about others. One young girl sitting alone in the playground, for example, was quickly spotted by two 'playground buddies' who sat with her until a friend could be found. She was soon skipping off happily to play, while the 'buddies' comforted another child who had lost her teddy.

- Pupils demonstrate a great ability for deep reflection, such as of the beauty of a butterfly when studying symmetry or the impact of losing brothers and sisters in a disaster.
- Pupils show great respect for others, including staff and visitors. They are helpful and keen to talk about their work.
- Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying or bad language in school because staff take swift and effective actions to prevent any minor altercations escalating into something more serious. No pupil has been excluded in recent years.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and have an excellent understanding of keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils lose focus in those lessons where the teacher talks for a little too long or when they find the work a little too easy for them.
- Attendance is usually well above average, but fell to average in 2013 because more parents took holidays during term time.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Despite some significant improvements, leadership and management require improvement because there has not been enough time for the actions taken by the headteacher and governors to bring about consistently good teaching and achievement.
- Policies and procedures for promoting literacy, especially writing, are not implemented consistently by teachers. Not all adhere to the marking policy or provide the best possible models of spelling and punctuation.
- The plans for improving writing are not sharply focused on those key areas of teaching that will raise achievement. The criteria by which the success of the school's actions will be judged make no reference to how much standards are expected to improve or how much more progress pupils should make.
- While most parents strongly praise the turnaround in the school's performance, a minority still feel that the job is not yet complete because teaching and progress are not yet good.
- Pupils are given outstanding opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding through the different subjects that they study, but not enough emphasis is placed on developing their writing skills. Leaders ensure that discrimination of any kind is challenged as soon as it arises.
- Nevertheless, the strong leadership provided by the headteacher and governors has had a major impact on the school. The falling trend in achievement at Key Stages 1 and 2 has been reversed as leaders have taken swift and decisive action through performance management to eliminate inadequate teaching.
- Teaching and progress are now good in reading, mathematics and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is managed by the headteacher. Pupils now enjoy their lessons and respond by behaving well and working hard.

- Other managers have also risen to the challenge of improving the school. The deputy headteacher, for example, has taken responsibility for improving the teaching of teachers new to the profession and provides good quality feedback on what they need to do to improve.
- The special educational needs coordinator has quickly overhauled the systems for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs, so they now make good progress.
- The local authority has accurately assessed the school's current situation and has reduced the amount of support it requires as a result of the improvements evident. Previously, the local authority had provided effective training to help improve teaching.
- Suitable plans have been drawn up for using the sports funding when it arrives. These include working with other schools to provide more opportunities for competitive sport.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have an exceptional understanding of performance data that they use to check that the headteacher is making the right decisions.
 - Governors are challenging but also supportive of the headteacher, especially when difficult decisions have had to be made, for example about how weaker teaching is to be tackled through performance management. They have ensured that they have been fully informed of the situations and how teaching is to be improved. No teacher was awarded a pay increase last year, for example, because the progress made by pupils did not warrant it.
 - The governing body meet statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding, and keeps a close check on the school's finances.

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	116782
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	426963

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Travis Latham
Headteacher	Derek Higgins
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2012
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