

Defford–Cum–Besford CofE School

Hill View, Defford, Worcester, WR8 9BH

Inspection dates

17–18 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

- Although standards are now improving, too few pupils have made good progress, particularly in Years 3 and 4, over the last few years.
- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not yet consistently good or outstanding.
- The pace in lessons is sometimes too slow and the work is not always challenging enough.
- Marking is not used consistently to inform pupils how to improve their work and move them on to the next level.
- Information about how well pupils are doing is not used regularly by teachers. They do not always move pupils quickly enough to the next stage in their learning. This slows their progress.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to show initiative, make choices about how they learn and assess their own performance.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by governors, is the major driving force behind the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and the rising standards throughout the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they feel safe. They show real interest and concern for one another.
- The school's new system for checking pupils' progress, combined with high-quality training for staff, is resulting in pupils receiving well-timed appropriate support. This enables them to make progress more quickly than previously.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 9 lessons, three of which were observed with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils read and observed a number of groups receiving support from teaching assistants. She also analysed the work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and a range of staff.
- The inspector took account of the 22 responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to the school's own questionnaire for parents and carers. She met with 30 parents informally.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, safeguarding documents, and records relating to attendance, behaviour and bullying.

Inspection team

Elaine Long, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Defford-Cum-Besford CofE School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are three classes: Nursery, Reception and Year 1 are taught together; Year 2 are taught on their own; Years 3 and 4 are taught together.
- Only a very small number of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority, for which the school achieves additional funding from the government (the pupil premium). There are not enough pupils eligible for the pupil premium to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- The majority of pupils are from White British heritage and a very low proportion come from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. A below-average proportion is supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress across all year groups, especially in Years 3 and 4, by ensuring:
 - learning moves at a demanding pace and pupils are always challenged
 - teachers know exactly where pupils are in their learning and re-shape lessons so that all pupils can make more rapid progress
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to show initiative and assess their own work
 - pupils know how they can improve their work and are given the time to follow up teachers' comments in marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment at Key Stage 1 has been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics over the past three years. Reading is the strongest subject; the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 compares favourably with national figures. Not enough pupils attain the higher Level 3 in writing.
- In Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress has not been as fast as it should have been over a number of years. The headteacher has acted swiftly to change this, and the impact of her actions is evident in the current progress of pupils.
- Pupils currently in Year 4 have been closely tracked since Year 3. At the end of Year 3, the headteacher tested and moderated all pupils' results. She has set demanding targets for these pupils and has tracked their progress against them through regular meetings with the teacher. Pupils in this year group are making better progress than in the past.
- In the 2013 national screening of pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) at the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected level was below average. Whole-staff training in this area has led to improvements.
- The school has very small cohorts and children's attainment on entry varies from year to year, but most start Nursery with skill levels which are typical for their age. As a result of good, and sometimes outstanding teaching, in a well-managed area, children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress compares very favourably with national figures.
- The headteacher has set challenging targets for all pupils. Progress and projections for pupils currently in Year 2 shows that they are making good progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The pupil premium is used well to support individual pupils. The purchase of interactive resources to aid the teaching and learning of phonics, combined with good quality one-to-one teaching, has enabled good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils and, although in the past progress has been slower in writing, the gaps are now narrowing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The teaching in Years 3 and 4 requires improvement, because it has not resulted in good or better progress. Here, the teaching has lacked challenge and pace and has not always built on what pupils already know and are able to do. In some cases, the checks made in lessons about how well the pupils understand the tasks have not been rigorous enough, and this has resulted in slow progress. Recent changes in teaching are resulting in pupils making faster progress than they have before.
- The quality of marking varies. At times, it lacks focus and comments are too general and fail to show pupils how they can improve their work. When marking does give guidance on what to do next, the pupils do not always respond to the advice. There are also insufficient opportunities for pupils to be involved in the assessment of their own learning.

- Teachers are involved regularly in checking the progress of pupils, but not all teachers are using this information consistently to ensure that the activities match the needs of individual pupils. This sometimes results in work which is either too easy or difficult and, as a result, progress is slower. Some teachers encourage pupils to become more independent learners and to make choices about how they would prefer to learn, but this is not yet consistent across the school.
- The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has improved since the last inspection. Here, the teaching is typically good and some teaching is outstanding.
- In the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 class staff encourage children to be independent and to take part in a wide variety of activities. High expectations and close tracking of children's progress lead to planned lessons which move at a brisk pace and help children develop as successful learners. The promotion of speaking and listening is at the heart of their learning. As a consequence, children's communication skills build well. Warm relationships between adults and children, and also among the children themselves, help children to grow in confidence.
- The teaching of early reading is now well organised and methodical. The teaching of sounds that letters make is regular and conducted at good pace and in ways which interest and motivate the pupils. As a result, attainment in reading is rising.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well and are skilful at asking questions and then allowing them to work on their own. This means that pupils develop confidence and make good progress.
- The school's new creative, themed approach to teaching is enjoyed by the pupils. A whole-school project on the painting 'Bathers at Asnières' by George Seurat involved a trip to the National Gallery. This was followed up by an afternoon exploring geography where a senior lecturer from Worcester University worked on a number of activities with all pupils. Teachers have used a recent trip to Warwick Castle to create learning opportunities for pupils across the school. These experiences motivate pupils and allow them to practise the key skills of reading, writing, numeracy and problem-solving, as well as encouraging teamwork, cooperation and responsibility.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school, in assemblies and at break and lunchtime is good. They treat themselves and others with respect. They are polite, friendly and courteous. They enjoy coming to school, reflected in the above-average attendance figures and good punctuality, and are proud to belong to it. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy taking on extra responsibilities, for example, as assembly monitors, mentors to younger pupils, or belonging to the School or Eco councils.
- Throughout their lessons and assemblies, pupils are given the skills they need to manage everyday risks for themselves. For example, they know how to use the internet safely, and they are aware of the dangers associated with the road, fire and talking to strangers. They are clear who to go to in the school if they feel worried or upset. All parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agree that their children feel safe and are happy at school.
- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They know about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, but report that it is rare.
- Pupils' abilities to work well with one another, to know the difference between right and wrong and to understand the feelings of others are strong features of school life. Pupils clearly understand the rules and appreciate their rewards. Relationships between pupils and adults are

excellent; there is a strong sense of teamwork among the staff.

- Parents are invited to weekly family assemblies to celebrate what their children have been learning that week. Parents speak very highly of this and attendance is high. Children show confidence and positively gleam knowing how proud their parents are of them.
- The school has a range of strategies to support pupils and families who experience difficulties, and the school liaison officer's contributions are helpful and welcomed.
- The school prepares pupils well for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development through the subjects taught, assemblies and trips. Pupils are well equipped for their next steps and are learning what it is like to live in a diverse society.

The leadership and management are good

Attainment is rising as a result of strong leadership and teamwork. The headteacher is relentless in her drive to improve teaching and raise achievement. Staff support her fully in this and know that they are held to account for the performance of their pupils. There is a common sense of purpose and morale is high.

- Inaccuracies in assessment have been pinpointed and new systems established that accurately chart pupils' progress. In addition, support has been targeted more precisely so that pupils in danger of falling behind are helped to catch up quickly with others.
- Lessons are visited regularly by the headteacher and detailed feedback provided to teachers so they can improve. The management of teachers' performance is detailed and rigorous and they are held to account fully for pupils' progress and achievement. There are clear links between pay increases and pupils' performance.
- Subject teaching gives pupils many enjoyable learning experiences that contribute greatly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies allow time for reflection and prayer, and pupils sing with enthusiasm and passion. Pupils value the family feel to their school and know the importance of their role in being part of a wider community.
- The school has excellent links with its cluster of schools, the local community and church and beyond. Vegetables are grown in the school garden which are then harvested and distributed to those in need. Visitors to the school, for example, a Gypsy, Roma, Traveller storyteller, encourage children to write stories of their own. Pupils have been very successful in a number of national competitions such as the Cheltenham Recorder Festival and 'The National Quilts Under 16 UK' show which they won with their Defford Tapestry.
- The school has a clear plan in place to use the primary sport funding to increase pupils' participation in sport, to develop skills, to make sure pupils develop healthy lifestyles and physical well-being and to contribute to important life skills such as teamwork and collaboration. It is being used to develop staff skills across the whole physical education curriculum, to secure adventurous training and canoeing workshops, expert sports coaching for extra-curricular activities and improve existing resources.
- The local authority has provided invaluable and timely support to the new headteacher. Officers from the local authority have worked closely with her providing specific guidance and training within the school. They have confidence in the new leadership and its capacity to improve the school further.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors know the school's strengths very well and what still needs to be done. They are in school regularly and visit lessons, meet with the staff and have a full programme of monitoring visits throughout the year. The reports they produce show they have a good understanding of what the school is doing to raise attainment. They have a good knowledge of how well the school performs in comparison with other schools. They have been closely involved with the new headteacher and the changes which have been made. They are well qualified to check that the headteacher is setting appropriate performance targets for teachers, rewarding good teachers and challenging underperformance. They ask challenging questions but also offer invaluable support. They make sure that the funds available through the pupil premium have been used well to improve achievement. They make sure all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding 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	116802
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	426965

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Renshaw
Headteacher	Andrea Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	March 2012
Telephone number	01386 750321
Fax number	NA
Email address	office@defford-cum-besford.worcs.sch.uk

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