

Bell Farm Community Primary School

Hersham Road , Hersham, Walton-on-Thames, KT125NB

Inspection dates 23–24 October 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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Pupils make inadequate progress in mathematics. There is a three-year declining trend in attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Up until very recently disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support and the most able pupils have made inadequate progress.
- Historically teachers have not always used the information they have about pupils to ensure work is set at the right level to meet the different needs of all the groups in their classes.
- Teachers do not always use teaching assistants well enough to help check and support pupils' learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement and they do not always tackle written work quickly enough. They are not given sufficient opportunity to respond to teachers' comments in their books.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have not done enough to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics.
- In the past governors did not hold senior leaders to account for falling standards and achievement. They have accepted too readily information given to them about the school's effectiveness.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher , supported by the new leadership team, knows what needs to be done to improve the school. Her drive and ambition inspire the current staff.
- Staff, pupils and parents are positive about changes that have taken place recently which have resulted in improvements in teaching, learning and pupils' achievements in the last term and a half.
- Governors are now asking challenging questions about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- The new Nursery, Reception and Year 1 classes are very effective in giving these youngest children a flying start.
- Pupils are polite and courteous.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 21 lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils from the school council, members of the governing body and the senior management team, some middle leaders, the admissions officer and a pastoral officer.
- The inspector met with the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard children read and discussed their reading preferences with them, observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and attended an assembly.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised, including the 'learning journey' records of the youngest children. Particular note was taken of work in books from the last academic year. Displays around the school were also examined.
- Note was taken of the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 67 responses made to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's data on pupils' progress, lesson planning, the school's checks on how well it is doing, monitoring documentation and the headteacher's log of improvement measures.
- Records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding were also examined.
- Inspectors met some parents informally at the start the day.

Inspection team

Anne Wesley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maura Docherty	Additional Inspector
Gavin Jones	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average sized primary school. It is currently expanding from a junior school into a primary school.
- It has 16 single-age classes, made up of 13 Key Stage 2 classes, two Reception classes and a new Year 1 class. There are no Year 2 classes yet. A Nursery opened this school year.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom speak English as an additional language.
- A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which in this school provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs supported at school action and school action plus is just below average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is just above average.
- A breakfast club, which is managed by the governing body, is provided.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been changes to the school's leadership since the previous inspection. A new headteacher started at the school in April 2013. Other members of the senior leadership team have joined since the time of the previous inspection. This term, seven new teachers began working at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to good or better so as to raise attainment for all groups of pupils, by:
 - making sure teachers use information about pupils effectively so that all parts of the lesson, including the introduction, are precisely matched to the needs of all the pupils in the class
 - ensuring all teachers are flexible enough in their planning to adapt activities to meet learners' emerging needs within the lesson, so that all are constantly challenged and supported
 - ensuring teachers deploy teaching assistants well throughout all parts of the lesson
 - improving pupils' attitudes to learning and ensuring they tackle written work quickly
 - ensuring the new marking system is used consistently well to help pupils to improve, especially making sure pupils have opportunities to respond to the teacher's advice.
- Rapidly improve progress in mathematics for all pupils especially those supported by pupil premium by:
 - making sure the mathematics programmes of work are sufficiently challenging and cover all required areas
 - ensuring teachers' planning of mathematics lessons moves pupils more quickly beyond basic calculations
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their number skills in problem-solving activities and to work by themselves to find their own ways to solve problems

- ensuring that pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding are given effective support to fill any gaps in their basic understanding and so rapidly catch up with their peers.
 - Improve leadership and management by:
 - checking the impact of new initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and increase the rates of pupil progress to ensure they are effective
 - strengthening the way that all senior leaders, especially new middle leaders, work with staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning and lift pupils' progress and raise standards more quickly
 - ensuring governors hold the school fully to account for its performance.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils do not achieve well enough. In 2012, the attainments at the end of Year 6 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics and the progress these pupils had made through the school was also well below what it should have been.
- The 2013 results show no improvement in attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6, which means that there has been a three-year declining trend. However, there have been improvements in English where attainment is significantly higher than in previous years.
- Progress in mathematics is slow throughout Key Stage 2; work is not sufficiently challenging for all pupils and does not cover all the aspects of mathematical understanding. Pupils are not taught well how to apply their basic skills. Teachers do not have sufficient understanding to adapt programmes to accelerate pupils' progress during lessons. As a result, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical understanding and independent ways of working. Pupils seldom use their skills to investigate problems in real-life situations.
- The school is not promoting equal opportunities well enough. In 2012, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 known to be eligible for free school meals was nearly a year behind that of their peers in mathematics and over six months behind them in English. Current data show that gaps between the performance of this group of pupils and their peers are not narrowing rapidly enough, because money spent on additional resources is not having enough impact.
- There are gaps in the attainment and progress of other groups of pupils. Too many disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and from minority ethnic backgrounds, those who speak English as an additional language and some of the most able learners do not achieve as well as they should as activities are not shaped well enough to meet their individual needs. However, specific support for pupils with special educational needs currently in Year 4 is having a positive impact on their progress in English. Pupils are now making better progress in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 than in previous years. Specific support for pupils with special educational needs in Year 3 and 4 is helping them to catch up in English. In tackling the underachievement in Years 3 and 4, pupils are better equipped when they move into Years 5 and 6.
- Since the appointment of the new headteacher, a system for monitoring the progress of groups of pupils has been used rigorously. In a short time, targeted support is having a positive effect and some accelerated progress can be seen. However, there has been too little time to fully counter the effect of a history of underachievement.
- Children coming into the Early Years Foundation Stage arrive with skills and abilities that are as expected for their age. Children in the new Reception classes made good progress in the setting's first year. The teacher in Year 1 has looked closely at the results of the Reception assessment data and is tailoring activities precisely to the needs of the pupils.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate over time and has had insufficient impact on improving pupils' learning since the previous inspection. There is not enough good or better teaching to ensure that pupils make the rapid progress that is needed to raise standards, particularly in mathematics, across the school.
- Teaching has not been tailored sufficiently well to meet the needs of specific groups of pupils. Too many different groups have underachieved, particularly pupils with special educational needs.
- Some mathematics teaching was not precisely matched to the needs of all the pupils in the class, in some instances all did the same work and the more able could have moved on to more challenging work more quickly. Furthermore some pupils were presented with work that was too difficult. In most lessons seen, the initiatives started by the new headteacher were evident in improving the quality of teaching; however, these improvements have not yet overcome the adverse effects of inadequate teaching in the past.

- Since the start of the school year, marking is now consistently good as can be seen in pupils' current books, in contrast to the weaker marking in their previous books. There are no longer unfinished, unmarked pieces of work in their books. Pupils could explain the system well and said that it helped them 'to do better next time'. As yet, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to respond to the teachers' advice.
- Some stronger teaching was seen during the inspection and, in these lessons, teachers used their knowledge of the pupils' abilities to move them on quickly. For example, pupils were enthused by their topics and in Year 6 they particularly enjoyed finding out about the Second World War and wrote some good accounts of life in an air-raid shelter. However, some pupils lacked the motivation to start writing and produced little, even though they had joined in with the discussions well.
- Pupils demonstrate some good knowledge of basic skills in mathematics but are much less confident in applying them to solve problems. However, a new investigative approach was seen when Year 5 pupils were learning to solve one- and two-step problems which will help them to tackle more complicated problems later on.
- Although teachers are making better use of assessment information to match tasks to pupils' level of ability, too often whole-class introductions are too long. They do not challenge the most able and are beyond the understanding of some less able. The result is that pupils are spending too much time on work that is either too easy for some or too hard for others.
- Teaching assistants work well with small groups of pupils and when they are supporting individuals. However, they are not deployed consistently well throughout the lesson and too often are uninvolved and passive observers when the teacher is talking to the whole class.
- Children in the Early Years classes are offered exciting learning opportunities to which they respond with great enthusiasm. They are curious about the world around them, make good choices about their own learning and persevere well to complete tasks. Children were inspired by the introduction to the theme of 'Celebrations' which was related to their own interests and led the planning on how to celebrate Halloween. The learning in this well-resourced setting is preparing the youngest children very well for the next stage in their education.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attitudes to learning require improvement. Where the pace of learning and teaching slows, pupils lose interest and sit quietly. In contrast, where teaching is good, pupils are 'fired up' and clearly enjoy the tasks set for them. However, there is often a reluctance to get started on written tasks, with the result that on occasion, too little written work is produced.
- A few parents have concerns that bullying is not dealt with effectively. However, pupils report there is no bullying and they are confident that if there were any issues, they would be dealt with quickly. They have a good understanding about the different kinds of bullying, especially bullying which might occur through the use of the internet and social networking sites.
- Pupils say there is no racism in the school. They were keen to explain that 'everyone gets on with everyone'. Playtime is a pleasant social occasion enjoyed by the pupils, who play well together. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. They behave well around the school, readily engage in conversation with visitors and display excellent manners.
- A revised policy to manage behaviour has been established by the new headteacher and is being used consistently well throughout the school. Pupils like the 'Class behaviour ladders' and say, 'They are fair and help everyone to behave well' and 'It wasn't so good before the ladders'.
- Detailed records of incidents and any misbehaviour show that prompt and decisive action is taken to address them. As a result pupils, feel safe and well cared for.
- The youngest children quickly learn the rules of good behaviour, settle well into school routines and form good relations with adults and other children.
- Attendance is improving and is now average. The school has worked hard to improve punctuality and now fewer pupils are late for school.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because over time, leaders have not been able to address the decline in pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics. However, the new headteacher and leadership team have taken action which is leading to significant improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- A new team of middle leaders has been established, with clear roles and responsibilities, and this is having an impact on raising achievement but there has been insufficient time for their actions to have improved standards significantly in their areas.
- Self-evaluation is now accurate and the school improvement plan identifies the right priorities to improve teaching and accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils.
- Over time, the school's procedures for checking the quality of its work have been insufficiently rigorous. However, the headteacher has introduced a clear system to help teachers track the progress of individual pupils. This is being used effectively, so that individual pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is checked regularly and reported on to governors.
- A new performance management scheme provides support, challenge and appropriate training for staff. Actions to bring about improvement are always followed through to see if they are successful. Teachers are being made accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes.
- Topics studied bring together different subjects in a way that some pupils describe as 'fun and interesting'; they appreciate the visits and visitors which enrich the themes considered. The wider curriculum contributes well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Additional funding to increase sporting opportunities has been used to enhance the quality and breadth of physical education and sport provision. Professional coaches are used to teach pupils skills in a diverse range of sports. Teachers' skills in teaching physical education are developing as they work in lessons with coaches.
- The local authority has supported the new headteacher and further support is planned. A recent review of leadership recognises that improvements have been made, particularly in the quality of teaching. The headteacher has welcomed the support and although improvement is in the early stages, she is determined to ensure that the quality of teaching will continue to improve.
- Parents are generally supportive of the school's work and are particularly pleased that the recent years of instability in the school's leadership has ended. They are positive about the new early years setting and Key Stage 1, typically saying, 'My son loves it, there are so many opportunities there for him, he is learning so fast!'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - In the past, governors did not hold senior leaders to account for falling standards and achievement, accepting too readily information given to them about the school's effectiveness. Governors say that they now are more fully informed and so in a better position to question the school on its effectiveness. They now have a better understanding of the need for rapid improvements and are working with the new headteacher on a strategic improvement plan as suggested in a recent Leadership Review. They are informed about the new systems which have been introduced and are closely monitoring the impact of initiatives. They scrutinise assessment data to check on pupils' progress against that of all pupils nationally and hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. They ensure performance management links pay with good teaching and play an effective role in making staff appointments and promoting staff within the school. Governors are now checking to ensure that pupils in receipt of the pupil premium receive the support they need to help them to achieve as well as other pupils. They are asking challenging questions and are supportive as they share the ambitions of the headteacher for the school to become much more effective. Governors regularly take part in training to ensure they are fully up to date. They ensure that all their statutory obligations are fully met, including those for safeguarding.

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	125058
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	428944

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	500
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pip Ashton
Headteacher	Anne Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 November 2011
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