

Balksbury Junior School

Floral Way, Salisbury Road, Andover, SP10 3QP

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| 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 progress across the school is starting to improve it is not yet rapid enough to compensate for past deficits in learning.
- Pupils do not make sufficiently accelerated progress in mathematics. They do not confidently apply their mathematical skills in a range of subjects and contexts.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs do not yet make good progress.
- Teachers do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. There is not enough outstanding teaching at present.
- Existing good practice in the marking of pupils' work in literacy and numeracy is not always used as well in other subjects.
- The school has not planned in sufficient detail for the use of additional sports funding, so that it is not clear what extra opportunities will be provided for pupils, or how this will be sustained over time.

The school has the following strengths:

- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are safe and behave well.
- Progress is beginning to improve across the school, particularly in writing. Standards have risen to be broadly average, with more pupils working at the higher levels.
- Pupils supported by extra government funding are now making better progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Leaders, including governors, now ensure that the school operates more effectively. As a result, the pace of improvement is accelerating.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, six of which were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the vice chair and another governor, the school’s senior and subject leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 47 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also looked at the school’s survey of the views of parents and carers, conducted early in 2013.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documents, including records of the school’s checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils’ progress. They also looked closely at pupils’ written work from the current school year, and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Homewood

Additional Inspector

Sue Horsnell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Balksbury Junior School is a larger-than-average-sized junior school.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those from service families) is slightly below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school offers a breakfast club. This is managed and inspected separately.
- The school entered into federation with Balksbury Infant School in April 2011, under a single, reconstituted governing body. The infant school headteacher at that time became executive headteacher of the two federated schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching across the school so that a greater proportion is outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - teachers have higher expectations of what all pupils, including the more able, can achieve
 - lessons have a brisk pace
 - existing good practice in marking is implemented across classes and in subjects other than literacy and numeracy.
- Raise standards and strengthen achievement, so that more pupils learn at a faster rate, ensuring that:
 - progress over time is consistently good, leading to higher standards, especially in mathematics
 - able pupils have the opportunity to tackle higher-level work
 - pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum
 - improvements to the provision for those who are disabled or who have special educational needs lead to more rapid progress for these pupils.
- Revise and develop the school's plan for the improvement of access to sport, so that all of the allocated funds are supportive of new initiatives, particularly those which provide further new opportunities for pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement. Pupils' progress in the last two years has not been fast enough, but this is starting to change for the better. Many pupils enter Year 3 with skill levels above those expected for their age. Prior to 2010, many pupils made inadequate progress, as a result, in part, of inadequate teaching, and left Year 6 with standards below those expected.
- Staff changes and intensive external support have, however, ensured that standards have risen recently. Progress across the school is improving, but is not yet rapid enough, particularly in mathematics. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their skills in mathematics. There is not yet sufficient accelerated progress to compensate for past deficits in learning and to raise standards further, particularly for the older pupils.
- Results at the end of Year 6 are now broadly average. In 2013, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 improved to be in line with the national average. More pupils are starting to tackle the challenging work at Level 6 in mathematics and reading. There are emerging strengths, particularly in writing. Progress in lessons is increasingly good and pupils' written work reflects teachers' increased expectations. Pupils build more effectively on their prior learning. Other than in Year 6, pupils now reach standards higher than those expected for their age.
- In 2013, the gap between the attainment of Year 6 pupils supported by pupil premium funding and that of their peers was equivalent to around one year of progress in English and mathematics. However, more funding is now deployed to remedy deficits in learning in eligible younger pupils. As a result, gaps in learning are reducing more quickly in Years 3 to 5.
- The majority of pupils enter the school with secure skills in reading. However, the school ensures that pupils they identify with less secure skills have support to enable them to catch up. The teaching of phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) within the 'nurture group' programme is good. As a result, pupils' progress in reading is beginning to improve. Regular guided reading sessions focus effectively on developing fluency, comprehension and enjoyment of reading.
- The school provides adequately for pupils with diverse needs. Provision has been reviewed recently. The recently appointed coordinator recognises that the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been inconsistent. Recent improvements in the deployment of support staff, and a rigorous appraisal of the programmes used, are ensuring that current progress is improving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- While teaching has improved and much is now good, it still requires improvement because it has not, over time, challenged pupils' learning sufficiently. There has not been enough good teaching to drive rapid progress. While improving, teachers' expectations are sometimes not high enough.
- The quality of teaching has improved, following staff changes. Teachers' planning is appropriately focused upon the needs of pupils. However, there is scope in some lessons to provide even greater challenge, especially for the many more-able pupils.
- While the proportion of good teaching has increased, there is little outstanding teaching. Teachers therefore lack easy access to a role-model of high-quality teaching over time.
- Systems for the checking of pupils' progress have improved. These are now well established. Pupils' work is carefully marked, with areas for improvement identified. However, better quality marking in writing and in mathematics is not consistently evident in other subjects. Opportunities are provided for pupils to correct any mistakes. The presentation of work, particularly in literacy and numeracy, is of good quality.
- More effective deployment of support and more rigorous checks on pupils' progress are ensuring better provision for pupils supported by pupil premium funding.
- When teaching is at its best, the pace of learning is brisk. In a good Year 3 'nurture group'

session, focused on phonics, planning was sharply aligned to individual needs. Pupils' attitudes to learning were extremely good, supporting good progress. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning was heightened in activities which are fun, such as making model pirate ships in one class. Questioning, with the constant asking of 'why?', required pupils to extend their thinking. As a result, they made good progress.

- Recent improvements to guided reading sessions and a greater focus on increasing pupils' confidence in reading are helping to raise standards.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare, with no recent exclusions. An effective behaviour management system ensures a consistent response to any issues. These good attitudes to learning, however, have not always been capitalised upon by all staff to boost pupils' learning to good levels.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Improvements in the quality of teaching are providing the opportunity for pupils to demonstrate their love of learning and to begin to make more rapid progress. When teaching is best, pupils are keenly engaged. Conduct is consistently good. Low-level disruption is rare.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know adults will resolve any difficulties. Few of the parents and carers who gave their views indicated any concerns about behaviour.
- Bullying is rare, with no recent incidents recorded. Pupils recognise that bullying may take many forms and that these will be tackled rigorously by the school.
- Pupils undertake responsibilities well, such as playground leaders, which contribute to the school community.
- Pupils have a good appreciation of risk, relating, for example, to the internet. Year 6 pupils know how to keep themselves safe in various circumstances, and are therefore well prepared for secondary school.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils mostly arrive at school punctually.

The leadership and management are good

- While there has not yet been sufficient time to demonstrate a secure track record of improvements in pupils' achievement, school leaders have successfully addressed almost all of the organisational weaknesses initially identified in 2010 and which remained as weaker features in 2012. They have successfully eradicated a large budget deficit. The school has demonstrated good capacity for further improvement.
- The senior leadership team is cohesive and effective. The deputy headteacher's role is now well established. Senior leaders have established a shared, ambitious vision. A middle leadership team has been established, with clear responsibilities to boost pupils' learning further. School improvement strategies are focused on the correct priorities. School-based checks on pupils' progress are now used well.
- There have been extensive changes in staffing, with inadequate teaching largely eliminated. Effective systems ensure that all staff have similar high expectations of, for example, the presentation of pupils' work. Assessment practice is securely in place. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is more effective. Staff have good access to professional development opportunities. Best practice is modelled by key staff as the basis for improving all teaching.
- The school's view of itself is accurate. Senior leaders rightly recognise the fundamental importance of the further acceleration of pupils' progress.
- Performance management systems are increasingly effective in improving the standards of teaching and in harnessing pupils' good behaviour to boost their learning. There is a close link between teachers' performance and pay progression.

- School leaders closely monitor the impact of pupil premium funding. This funding is now contributing effectively to better gains in learning for qualifying pupils across the school.
- The current curriculum meets most pupils' needs adequately. There is a significant focus on literacy and numeracy, with greater evidence of the use of writing across the curriculum. This is less evident in mathematics. Science and topic work, such as history and geography, is adequately, but not extensively, developed. Pupils experience an appropriate range of visits, visitors and events to add interest and enjoyment.
- Planning for the use of the primary sports funding is underdeveloped. Initial activities relate to staff training and enhancement of resources. However, it is not yet clear how the school will demonstrate how it intends to improve opportunities for pupils, or to increase participation in after-school sports activities.
- Support from the local authority was extensive when the school's performance was causing concern. Subsequently, the level of support has been reduced.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Community links and links with parents and carers have improved. Partnerships within the Federation and with other schools are good and contribute to the sharing of best practice.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is a significant strength. It has undergone far-reaching restructuring, following federation. Governors bring considerable expertise and ensure that the school has a clear strategic direction. They willingly undertake training and have well-established skills and understanding. They have a realistic view of the school's strengths and are fully involved in school self-evaluation and school development planning. They have a good understanding of school and national data, and can compare the school's performance with that of others. They are focused and effective in holding school leaders to account, provide considerable challenge and are determined that remaining weaknesses are remedied quickly. Governors are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. Pay and promotion are now firmly linked to teachers' effectiveness. Governors carefully evaluate the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' achievement. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements. All other statutory duties are met.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 115852 |
| Local authority | Hampshire |
| Inspection number | 403603 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 324 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Catherine Hegarty |
| Headteacher | Patricia Murley |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 July 2012 |
| Telephone number | 01264 365642 |
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