

Blackburn Primary School

Baring Road, Blackburn, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S61 2BU

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The school's overall effectiveness has declined markedly since the last inspection and is now inadequate. There is too little sign of improvement and the capacity to improve quickly is weak.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is inadequate and has been for some time. Pupils are not prepared adequately for their next stage of education.
- From their particular starting points, pupils of all abilities and groupings make too little progress in developing their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are too low, particularly in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Teaching has been, and still is inadequate. Far too little is good enough to raise standards and achievement quickly. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. They fail to plan work that would allow pupils of different abilities to learn effectively.
- Too much teaching fails to motivate or fully engage pupils. As a result, some pupils' attitudes to their work require improvement.
- Leaders have been slow to tackle weaknesses in teaching because arrangements for checking and evaluating it are weak. Leaders judge teaching and the school's effectiveness to be better than it actually is.
- Strategies to improve teaching, including the management of teachers' performance, have been ineffective.
- Teachers do not receive clear enough guidance on how to improve their teaching skills.
- Governors are ineffective in holding the school to account. They do not challenge leaders well enough about pupils' underachievement and the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has quickly and accurately identified what needs to be improved and has enlisted additional external support from a headteacher and consultant.
- Pupils behave well and are a credit to their parents and to the school. Most are eager to learn.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school, and that bullying is not an issue.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed significant parts of 24 lessons, four jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher. All full-time teachers were seen teaching. They also looked at work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior staff, three members of the governing body, representatives of the local authority, and formally and informally with pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence. This included the school's website, assessment records both current and historical, its development plan, records of governing body meetings, the record of the recent school review, and the school's self-evaluation documents. Many summaries prepared by the headteacher outlining new initiatives designed to secure improvements were reviewed.
- The school's policies and documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding and the school's curriculum were looked at.
- Inspectors considered 26 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire for parents (Parent View), and 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Terry McDermott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sharon Lambert

Additional Inspector

David Tingle

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), 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

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most classes contain pupils from single-age groups but two classes are mixed-age. Class 7 comprises of pupils from Years 3 and 4 and Class 4 comprises of pupils from Years 1 and 2.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.
- Almost all pupils are of White British origin. All pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher has been in post since September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and so that all pupils make good or better progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - eradicating any inadequate teaching that exists
 - making sure all teachers have high expectations about what each pupil is capable of achieving
 - improving teachers' planning so that pupils of all abilities are given appropriately challenging tasks and particularly so that the most-able pupils, those who are lower-attaining and those with special educational needs learn at a fast rate
 - making sure that teachers check closely during lessons that the work given is leading to new learning, particularly when pupils are working out of class
 - making sure that pupils are given enough time in lessons to develop their skills and knowledge for themselves
 - making sure that pupils spend enough time in lessons working on interesting and challenging activities that motivate them and result in them developing good attitudes to learning
 - developing the role of teaching assistants so that they can make a more effective contribution to developing pupils' basic skills.
- Improve pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, so that they reach above average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6 and are well prepared for the next stage of their education by:
 - improving pupils' accuracy in their use of grammar, spelling and punctuation
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in all their lessons across the curriculum
 - providing regular and frequent opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical calculation

skills to work things out for themselves, both mentally and in writing, and use them to solve problems

- providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their reading skills so that they build well on their good start in learning to read.

■ Urgently improve the school’s leadership and management so that improvement is driven forward at a rapid rate by:

- making sure that greater account is taken of pupils’ progress when undertaking observations of teaching so that the school’s view of its effectiveness is more accurate
- making sure that leaders check more carefully that all teachers’ assessments at the end of every year are accurate, and particularly the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6
- ensuring that leaders at all levels rigorously check the impact of their work in the areas for which they are accountable, especially in terms of improving achievement and the quality of teaching
- ensuring subject leaders contribute effectively to supporting other teachers
- making sure that improvement plans contain clear, specific and measurable priorities, against which progress can be regularly evaluated
- increasing the impact of the performance management of staff by ensuring that they are held fully accountable for pupils’ progress and improving the quality of their classroom practice.

■ Strengthen the effectiveness of the governing body in holding the school to account by:

- ensuring that governors challenge leaders more rigorously about pupils’ achievement and the quality of teaching
- providing thorough training for new governors so that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities
- undertaking an external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school’s use of the pupil premium, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Ofsted will make recommendations on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, all groups of pupils, including the most able, currently underachieve and have done over several years in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics. Pupils do not currently learn enough in lessons.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 have declined since the last inspection. Too many pupils now leave the end of Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that are below average. This represents inadequate progress from their previously broadly average starting points. In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below average. Expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly the most able, are too low.
- In Key Stage 2, not enough pupils make the expected rate of progress and so standards by the end of Year 6 are too low in relation to the previous starting points. The work seen in pupils' books shows that basic skills in both literacy and numeracy are underdeveloped. Pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are particularly weak and their mathematical calculation and problem-solving skills are underdeveloped. This means that pupils are not prepared well enough with the skills needed to be successful in the next stages of their education.
- The school's own methods for checking pupils' progress reveal, and inspection evidence confirms, that too many pupils currently in Year 6 have not made enough progress relative to their starting points. Despite some very recent work to improve the consistency of teaching in Key Stage 2, the quality remains too weak to improve pupils' achievement quickly enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs underachieve because provision for them is inadequate. Too many of these pupils fall behind in their learning, particularly as they progress through Key Stage 2. Leaders do not ensure that all teachers plan well enough to meet these pupils' needs.
- Pupils supported through pupil premium also make inadequate progress because they do not receive sufficient support to close the gaps in their learning quickly. In Year 6 in 2013, for example, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals was much lower than other pupils in the year group, particularly their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar, which were more than two years behind. Inspection evidence shows that across the school gaps remain and for some pupils are not closing quickly enough. Pupils get off to a good start in learning to read, as the results from Early Years Foundation Stage and the phonics screening check in Year 1 show. However, pupils thereafter do not build well enough on this good start.
- Those parents who gave their opinions on Parent View consider their children make good progress. This view is not shared by the inspectors. Many pupils should be doing much better in mathematics, in reading and in writing.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding broadly at the levels expected for their age. Learning gets off to a steady start. Children make progress at a better rate than in other years groups because of better teaching and work that is more accurately matched to children's varying needs. Most enter Year 1 with a good level of development.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate overall because the progress of pupils, over time, in English and mathematics has been too slow for several years. Less than a quarter of the teaching seen during the inspection was judged to be good. Teaching overall is not improving quickly enough. Too much requires improvement and a significant minority remains inadequate, particularly in Key Stage 2, which leaders have yet to eradicate. There are too many inconsistencies in the quality of the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics to improve achievement quickly enough.

- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is inadequate because pupils are not given enough opportunities to use, apply and practise their skills in lessons and across other subjects. Pupils' numeracy skills, for example, are underdeveloped because teachers do not ensure they use their calculation skills independently, either mentally or in writing, or to solve problems.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. Too often, pupils are set work which does not challenge them to learn. This is particularly the case for the most-able pupils, who find the work too easy, finish quickly and wait for too long before being given their next task. Sometimes, teachers ask pupils who have finished their work to spend time helping their classmates who have not understood what to do. As a result, opportunities to extend their learning further are missed.
- Teachers' planning does not take enough account of the varying needs and abilities of pupils. For example, some lower-attaining pupils were given menial, uninspiring and unchallenging counting tasks to complete while other pupils were weighing, balancing and measuring. This prevented them from taking part in the more exciting, practically-based activities provided for other pupils and reduced their learning considerably.
- Teaching sometimes fails to motivate and engage pupils enough in their work. In too many lessons, pupils have too little time to complete their tasks. At such times, pupils sometimes find it difficult to maintain their interest and motivation and so their attitudes to learning are not always good.
- Teachers do not check rigorously enough that small group or one-to-one work led by teaching assistants or other adults is leading to new learning or helping pupils to learn as intended, particularly when they are working outside of the classroom. Teaching assistants are not routinely used to good effect. Too many opportunities are missed to use support from teaching assistants to focus on developing pupils' basic skills, including vocabularies and speaking skills.
- The quality of marking is too variable. Some marking is cursory. More usually it praises effort. However, it does not provide clear enough guidance so that pupils know what they need to do next to improve their work. Teachers do not make enough reference to pupils' basic handwriting, grammar, punctuation, spelling and presentation skills and so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. For some pupils, the quality of presentation of work in their books, including their handwriting, had clearly deteriorated, without comment from the teacher.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and teachers give their pupils regular praise and encouragement. Consequently, pupils behave well in lessons and try hard even when lessons are mundane. This reflects the school's good provision for building pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Some teaching has been improved and a minority of teaching is good. There is some good teaching in every key stage. This is when teachers demand that pupils think their own way through more challenging problems. As a result, some pupils are starting to make better progress. However, this improved practice is not commonplace nor has it shown any consistent and proven impact over time.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Behaviour and safety requires improvement because, in lessons, some pupils' attitudes to learning are not always good. While pupils are compliant and mostly listen when teachers are talking, for too many teaching is not helping them develop the skills and attitudes required to learn for themselves. Some low-level inattention or restlessness was observed, for example when the teaching failed to motivate and interest pupils and when work was not set at the right level.
- Nevertheless, pupils' behaviour is generally good in classrooms. They do not disrupt lessons even when they find the work too easy or even too hard. They also behave well at social times, including in the playgrounds and in the dining room. Behaviour is managed well. Inappropriate behaviour is unusual and handled swiftly and sensitively.
- Pupils move around the school calmly and with consideration for each other. They are always polite and friendly and take pride in wearing their uniform smartly and are keen to help to keep

their classrooms tidy. They can be trusted to work sensibly when not directly supervised. They sustain their concentration well, particularly when work is based on practical investigation or follows up an interesting topic.

- Pupils can explain clearly why they are safe in school. They say the teachers look after them well. Their parents confirm this. They say they feel secure in school, and confidently express their trust in any adult should they need help to overcome any personal issues that may arise.
- Pupils are fully aware of the different forms bullying can take and are particularly dismissive of prejudice-based bullying. They say that bullying is rare and even then, is confined to some name-calling. These positive attributes illustrate that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is no discrimination or prejudice shown in this school because adults have consistently modelled the attributes of respect, tolerance and politeness.
- Attendance is broadly average. Pupils say they like school because they are happy and well looked after. They are particularly positive about the quality and variety of school lunches.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Leaders and managers lack the ability to improve the school quickly enough to ensure good achievement for all pupils. Standards are not rising as quickly as they should because leaders' actions to improve the school are ineffective. Too many pupils are underachieving as a result.
- The leadership of teaching is weak. Although senior leaders accurately evaluated the quality of teaching in lessons observed jointly with inspectors during the inspection, over time evaluations have been overgenerous. This is because leaders have not focused well enough on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time or taken enough account of the quality of work in pupils' books or the teaching of different groups of pupils. Weaknesses in teaching, therefore, have not been identified quickly enough, addressed or improved. Teachers have not been given the guidance they need to improve their skills. Their assessments of what pupils know and can do are not always accurate. As a result, the quality of teaching has deteriorated and is now inadequate overall.
- Not enough has been done through performance management to hold staff to account for the progress of pupils or to ensure that the quality of teaching improves. Leaders do not check that the development points arising from their monitoring of their teaching are put into practice. Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.
- The recently-appointed headteacher has quickly settled into her role. She has already identified the many areas which require urgent improvement and has begun to take appropriate actions to address some of them. To do so, she has enlisted additional external support from a headteacher and consultant and is forging closer partnerships with schools within the local learning community. These actions have only been in place for a short time and it is too early to see the full impact.
- The ability of the school to improve at a good enough rate is hampered because the skills of some other senior and middle leaders are underdeveloped. They do not check rigorously enough whether work in the areas for which they are accountable is having an impact on improving achievement and the quality of teaching. Subject leaders do not contribute effectively to supporting other teachers to improve.
- Improvement plans are in place but they do not contain clear, specific and measurable priorities, against which progress can be regularly evaluated.
- The school's curriculum offers a wide range of well-supported extra-curricular activities, including sports, various art and creative clubs and several residential visits. There is too little focus on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics and as a result, the curriculum is inadequate. Pupils' inadequate achievement in Years 1 to 6 means that the promotion of equality is not effective.
- The new primary school sport funding has been invested in securing specialist teaching from within the learning community in order to develop staff skills in teaching physical education and to encourage greater participation rates to improve pupils' well-being.

- The local authority has been aware of the school's inadequacies for some time, but has been unable to work effectively with the school until this term. The very recent supported self-review of the school which included local authority representation does not fully reflect the weaknesses in the school identified by inspectors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body does not have the necessary knowledge and skills to hold leaders and managers robustly to account for the decline in the school's performance, pupils' poor outcomes and weak teaching. This is because governors' understanding of the information about the school's performance and how it compares to other schools is underdeveloped. Governors are over-reliant on leaders' own reports to inform their view of the school's effectiveness rather than checking for themselves. Some governors are new and are yet to receive thorough training so that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities.
 - Governors fail to carry out some of their statutory responsibilities effectively. They do not know how well staff are carrying out their responsibilities because the management of teachers' performance has been ineffective. They have not ensured that leaders' and teachers' pay awards have been linked well enough to the quality and impact of their work. They do, however, ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
 - Governors know how the pupil premium is being allocated and spent but do not know the impact it is having on pupils' progress and standards.

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	106834
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	425987

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	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Gilling
Headteacher	Jane Sanderson
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2010
Telephone number	01709 740412
Fax number	01709 550948
Email address	blackburn.primary@rotherham.gov.uk

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