

Blackheath Primary School

Britannia Road, Rowley Regis, B65 9NF

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
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 requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over the past three years attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been below average and pupils are still not making good progress the time they start school.
- Progress in Year 3 to 5 is too slow, which means that pupils have too far to catch up in Year 6.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons are often too low.
- Teaching assistants are not used effectively in all classes.
- Work in pupils' books varies from very good to untidy and careless.
- Teaching is not usually strong enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, reach the levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils lose interest and their attention drifts in many of the lessons where teaching requires improvement.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have not made sure that pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have been good in all classes.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong teaching in Year 6 has resulted in pupils making good progress in their last year at the school.
- Results at Key Stage 1 are improving.
- Pupils say they are well looked after and their parents agree.
- The acting headteacher has quickly gained the respect of all staff and formed a strong team, who are improving teaching and, as a result, pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, visiting 29 lessons and part lessons and observing all teachers. Seven lessons were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher and other leaders and managers, as well as representatives of the governing body and of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's development plan, records of the governing body meetings, safeguarding arrangements, school incident logs and work in pupils' books.
- Parents and carers were asked for their views at the beginning and end of the school day and the views of the 13 parents who contributed to the online Parent View survey were analysed.

Inspection team

Simon Griffiths, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wendy Hanrahan

Additional Inspector

Sally Yates

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Others come from many different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than the national average. This is extra funding provided by the government to support certain pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above the national average but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school has undergone a recent period of significant staff change. The current acting headteacher has been in post since June 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good with more which is outstanding by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils, and especially the most-able pupils, can achieve in every lesson
 - teachers regularly asking harder questions and not accepting first answers if pupils can do better
 - making sure that teaching assistants are fully aware of what they need to do to support pupils
 - teachers making sure that pupils' work in all classes is well presented and is always their best
 - ensuring that lessons gain the interest and involvement of all pupils.
- Improving the impact of leadership and management by:
 - sharpening the school improvement plan so that it is clear what individual leaders have to achieve by when
 - ensuring that leaders' observations of lessons focus on what and how well pupils are learning
 - ensuring that good practice in teaching is shared
 - making clear to teachers the standards expected of work in books, and checking and feeding back on whether these have been met.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children join the school with skills and knowledge which are below those expected for their age and sometimes well below. This is particularly the case with language and communication skills. Children settle quickly into school routines. Typically, they make expected progress in the Nursery and Reception classes but they join Key Stage 1 with levels that are still below average.
- Results in Key Stage 1 have risen in each of the last three years. They are now much closer to average in reading and writing, and broadly average in mathematics. Given the pupils' starting points this now represents expected progress. The progress of pupils currently in Key Stage 1 is not consistent across all classes.
- In 2012, relatively few pupils reached the nationally expected levels in the Year 1 screening check in phonics (the linking of sounds and letters). However, in 2013, the numbers were much closer to the national average.
- Progress at Key Stage 2 is patchy. In Years 3 to 5, pupils make slower progress than they should. This means that, despite good progress in Year 6, pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable. This is particularly true for the most able pupils.
- By the time they leave Key Stage 2, pupils typically achieve levels, in each of reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with the national average.
- The proportion of the most-able pupils reaching the higher levels is below average overall but, in mathematics, some pupils reached the highest levels. School records and pupils' work show that these pupils are making the progress they should. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make expected progress.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding made good progress in 2012 but gaps widened in 2013, when pupils in Year 6 were approximately a term behind their classmates in reading, two terms in writing and two terms in mathematics. The school's tracking of pupils' progress shows that, in some classes, pupils supported by pupil premium funding are now achieving better than other pupils and that the gaps are beginning to close for younger pupils.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage has recently improved and pupils are now reaching levels closer to those expected for their age. The classrooms have been improved considerably.
- Pupils achieve good levels in physical education lessons. They work carefully and accurately in their gymnastics.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning in the best lessons. They work together well in groups and also as individuals.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not enabled pupils to make good progress. The majority of teaching enables pupils to make no better than expected progress and therefore requires improvement. While there are examples of good and outstanding teaching, the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to raise pupils' achievement to good.

- Expectations of how much the pupils can achieve are too low. Lessons are well ordered and teachers give pupils much encouragement but questions and work are often not difficult enough to make pupils, particularly the most-able pupils, think hard and become excited about their learning. When the work is too easy, pupils' attention starts to wander.
- The teaching of phonics has improved but is not yet consistently good across all classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Lessons do not ensure that all pupils fully take part and the teaching of sounds is not always accurate.
- The use made of teaching assistants is inconsistent. In some lessons, it is not always clear what the groups of pupils working with a teaching assistant are expected to learn. In another lesson, the teaching assistant taught the group with specially prepared resources and clear learning tasks. In that lesson, they made good progress.
- The work in pupils' books is not of a consistent quality and the level of presentation and marking varies greatly. In some classes, the standard is very high for pupils of different abilities, including the most able. In other classes, work is poorly presented and pupils do not have pride in their work.
- Teachers care about the pupils and ensure that they are happy and secure in lessons. They give pupils much encouragement and see to it that they have enough time to complete their work. Many are skilled at checking how well the pupils are getting on; for example, appropriately interrupting the lesson to give additional explanations.
- Pupils' progress is now being tracked closely and extra help is put into place for those who need it. There are good partnerships with other agencies.
- The teaching of physical education by specialist teachers is good. Pupils are taught to jump and land with care and attention to detail. The skills of vaulting, for example, are broken down into the various stages and pupils grow in confidence and learn how to do it properly.
- Parents say they think the teachers care about their children and say that the teachers are approachable.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils behave very well in some lessons, there are too many lessons where pupils lose interest because the teaching does not capture their full attention.
- Pupils are very well behaved around school and in the playground. A few parents voiced some concerns about behaviour at lunchtimes although inspectors saw only good behaviour and adults working hard to provide interesting activities for pupils, such as activities with a play parachute and also organised football.
- The dining room is calm and pupils move around school in an orderly way. They are polite and friendly. Adults provide good role models.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and report that adults care for them well. There are few instances of bullying, but, if and when it occurs, adults deal with it well. Most parents agree with this. Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and the school has made particular efforts to ensure that pupils know how to

protect themselves from internet bullying.

- Attendance has been low in the past but is improving and is now average as a result of clear policies and also more interesting activities in lessons, which make the pupils want to come to school.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not ensured that pupils have achieved as well as they should and that teaching is consistently good in all classes.
- Subject and other leaders are a new team and have been given the opportunity to lead. They are highly supportive of the actions the acting headteacher is taking and are growing in confidence. They look at teachers' planning and work in books but are not experienced in holding teachers to account for pupils' performance.
- The acting headteacher has successfully created a team of leaders and staff who are committed to improving the school and there are clear signs of improvements. There has been a lot of staff change and a temporary senior leader has been recruited to assist her until the team is back at full strength.
- The acting headteacher has recognised where improvements are required and she has acted quickly. An example is the recently improved Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms. She has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has put into place an appropriate, basic school improvement plan that addresses the correct priorities.
- A new and detailed system has been introduced for the performance management of teachers, linked to pay. It is closely tied to how well the pupils are doing. Leaders regularly observe lessons. Leaders' judgements on lessons are accurate but their written records do not make it clear enough to teachers what different groups of pupils learned and whether they learned enough that was new.
- The leader for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is putting into place a more effective system to track pupils' progress and ensure that pupils at risk of falling behind are given extra help more quickly.
- The curriculum is improving. The pupils talk excitedly about the best things they have done and can remember lessons that were exciting. Lessons are grouped into interesting themes and pupils enjoy visits and visitors, such as 'Dinosaur Mike'.
- The new leaders have made clear plans to use the additional sports funding. The school employed sporting coaches before the new funding was available and are now ensuring that teachers develop their own skills. It is too early to assess the impact of the spending.
- The school has reviewed its use of the pupil premium funding from the previous year and leaders and managers are determined to use this more effectively to further close gaps in eligible pupils' achievement.
- Safeguarding meets all statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides a lot of support through the school improvement adviser and

subject consultants. This is valued by the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have seen the school through a difficult period. They recognise that they have overseen a period of underperformance at the school. However, they now understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are keen to support the acting headteacher and staff team. They are actively involved in the life of the school; for example, running an after-school club, arranging visitors to school to lead assemblies and also a visit to a local supermarket, which pupils particularly enjoyed. They are aware that the school has not done as well as it might in the recent past and are keen to improve their knowledge and skills in order to both support and challenge leaders more effectively. They are fully aware that the progress of pupils supported by pupil premium funding needs to be improved and are eager to develop their skills in ensuring that the extra funding is used to maximum benefit for those pupils. They know about the quality of teaching through receiving reports and observing lessons. They make effective use of the published information on the school and have found the *Data Dashboard* particularly helpful in providing clear information. They have worked with the new leaders to establish a policy for managing the performance of teachers with clear links to pay, which is aimed at rewarding good teaching and tackling underperformance. They carry out their statutory responsibilities and have ensured that the funding is there to employ senior teachers if they can be recruited.

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	103981
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	440508

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Rushton
Headteacher	Pali Nahal
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2010
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