

Ball Green Primary School

Whitfield Road, Ball Green, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST6 8AJ

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Overall standards reached by pupils by the time they leave Year 6 are above average and their attainment in reading is significantly above average.
- All groups of pupils, including those with disabilities and special educational needs and those entitled to support through the pupil premium, make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have taken decisive action to eradicate all inadequate teaching. Teaching is now good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are trained very well. They work exceptionally well together to ensure that pupils are excited about and engaged in their learning.
- Attendance has significantly improved since the last inspection and is now above average.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the education that their children receive. They say that they are well informed about their children's progress, that the school is very approachable and that their children are safe and well cared for.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They relish all opportunities they have to work and learn together and are very eager to share what they have learned with adults and their classmates.
- The school's new leadership team's well-organised actions ensure achievement is accelerating. All staff strive to realise the school's motto of 'every child, every chance, every day'.
- Governors ensure that they are involved in the life of the school and are increasingly well informed about what it needs to do to further improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment is improving, but is still below average in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and writing throughout the school.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to discover things for themselves through their learning.
- Pupils do not consistently know what to do to further improve their work.
- Data on pupils' performance is not always used effectively enough by middle managers to gain a precise understanding of exactly how well pupils are achieving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, including parts of lessons, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read using phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make).
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 2, 3, 4, and 5, and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors considered 13 responses to Parent View, 27 questionnaires completed at the time of the inspection, the school's own surveys of parent views, letters from parents and ad hoc discussions with 11 parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took account of 19 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority school improvement service
- A meeting was held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Various school documents were examined. These included data on pupils' progress, external school evaluations, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of the governing body's meetings, the school's development plan and review of its own performance, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Choi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is triple the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just below average.
- The school receives additional funding through the pupil premium for the majority of its pupils. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has a very small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection the school has been reorganised and has a new headteacher and deputy headteacher as well as a new middle management tier. A number of new teachers have been employed, including a newly qualified teacher. Several new governors have been appointed
- The school runs a breakfast club and a range of after-school activities. A Children's Centre operates from the site; this is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is good or better, and in so doing raise levels of attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 1 and in writing throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that pupils always know how to improve their work
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to investigate and find things out for themselves
 - helping pupils in Key Stage 1 to use their mathematical skills more to solve problems
 - improving pupils' basic skills in writing with more opportunities to write across the curriculum.
- Strengthen leadership and management by checking middle managers use information about pupils' progress more effectively to gain a precise understanding of pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Nursery with exceptionally low skills and abilities. Their language, communication and personal development skills are especially weak. However, highly skilled and caring teachers and other adults ensure that they get off to an excellent start and make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Overall attainment is much closer to expected levels by the time pupils enter Year 1.
- Results of assessments at the end of Year 2 have been rising, although in 2013 they remained below average. Senior leaders have eradicated all inadequate teaching and improved support for pupils at risk of falling behind. As a result of this, pupils' progress is now good. Attainment in reading is at the level expected for this age. Although attainment in writing and mathematics is still below average it is rapidly improving.
- Pupils' overall performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 was the best that it has been for several years, and significantly better than in 2012. Standards in reading and mathematics were well-above average. Standards in writing were not quite as high and was below the national average. The school's current data shows that pupils make good progress in all subjects and that standards in reading and mathematics remain above average. Standards in writing, although still weaker than other subjects, are improving and are closer to average. Pupils have been set challenging targets to attain by the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. The school's current data show that their good progress means they are on-track to attain these.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading throughout the school. Teaching has improved with extensive reading opportunities provided to ensure that the school's proportion of higher-attaining readers remains significantly above average. The less able pupils who read for inspectors said that they used their 'robot skills' to chop-up, sound-out and read unfamiliar words.
- Standards in mathematics are above average in Key Stage 2, and improving at Key Stage 1. Older pupils' work reveals that they regularly carry out surveys and record each other's opinions using various graphs and charts. Teaching provides younger pupils with the skills to use numbers well for simple calculations but they are less confident to apply their skills to solve problems. Nevertheless, pupils across all year-groups make good progress.
- Decisive action has been taken by senior leaders, for example the new creative curriculum, to raise attainment in writing. This is making writing more purposeful for pupils. Teaching is improving attainment with many pupils now able to write in different styles. However, punctuation and grammar are not yet secure and not enough time is allocated to extending writing across subjects.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well, and ensures that, for example, the curriculum is of equal interest to boys as it is to girls. As a result of this, any gaps between the performance of boys and girls are much narrower than those found nationally.
- The school is determined to increase its number of higher-attaining pupils and success is evident especially in Key Stage 2 with the rise in pupils reaching higher levels especially in reading. Overall these pupils make good progress and several activities boost their skills. For example, the most able Year 6 pupils support Key Stage 1 pupils with their reading, and the 'master classes' in mathematics are accelerating their progress.
- Pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good progress and achieve well. In 2013, their attainment in all subjects, except writing, was much better the national average. The school's current data show that their performance in reading, writing and mathematics is in line with their classmates.
- The performance of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is closely monitored. The school's current data show that pupils from these groups are performing at least as well as their classmates.
- The performance of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is closely checked with support through, for example, one-to-one teaching, being provided precisely when it is needed.

As a result of this they continue to make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Senior leaders and governors have taken concerted action that has resulted in the significant improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now consistently good. As a result of these improvements, progress is now good and attainment is rising.
- Pupils are interested and engaged in their learning because teaching is imaginative and good subject knowledge is shared effectively to extend skills and knowledge. Pupils' interest is evident in their eagerness to talk about their work and share what they have learned. This was apparent in Year 6 where pupils really extended their understanding of the tragedy of the Titanic as they dressed up as first-class passengers and talked about their experiences. Their books reveal that they take great pride in their topic work, and regularly work at home.
- Pupils enjoy investigating and, when given the opportunity, are eager to make decisions about their work. However, these opportunities are not as frequent as they could be and this leads to some pupils lacking experience in deciding a plan of action, or, as in mathematics and writing, applying their skills.
- Teachers and other adults care for and support children in the Early Years Foundation Stage outstandingly well. Working in a very stimulating and interesting environment children are often free to learn and find things out for themselves.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together across all year-groups. Teaching assistants are fully involved in supporting various groups of pupils and in ensuring that they make good progress.
- Teaching is effective because tasks are provided that include a good level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. For example, this was the case in Year 5 mathematics when pupils showed good skills in reviewing an aerial map showing the coordinates for Ball Green and then successfully plotted their own coordinates on a grid system. All pupils were fully engaged and the most able pupils selected 'golden challenges' that took their learning onto the next level.
- Regular checking on teachers' marking has had a positive impact on improving its quality. The majority of teachers take great care when marking pupils work, indicating how they can take the next steps in their learning and providing 'fix it time' at the beginning of lessons for pupils to improve on previous work. However, despite this, and teachers use of 'working walls' and 'target rings' displayed around the school, not all pupils are able to say precisely how well they are doing in their learning, or what they need to do to further improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy coming to school, as evidence by their good attendance. They recently decided on the new colour and design of their school uniform, which they wear smartly and with pride. Pupils behave well in school corridors, at play and during lunch times. Older pupils are very mature and responsible. They are happy to listen to younger pupils read and sit with them during lunch time.
- Consistently good management of behaviour ensures that even those pupils who might otherwise find it difficult to maintain full concentration during lessons are fully engaged and behave well.
- Pupils are very respectful. They genuinely celebrate the achievements of others and form part of a school that has a common purpose and a common goal. This was exemplified during an outstanding whole-school assembly where pupils cheered in excitement for two classes that had achieved 100% attendance and then sat in total silence while waiting to hear who was to be chosen as 'pupil of the week'.
- Those pupils who spoke to inspectors were adamant that behaviour is good almost all of the time and that bullying is extremely rare and always dealt with swiftly. The vast majority of parents

support this view, as do staff. The school's behaviour logs confirm that incidents of bad behaviour are rare, and that any cases of bullying or name calling, for example, are always dealt with to the satisfaction of parents.

- Pupils know that people should not be treated differently because of how they look or what they believe in. They say that prejudice and discrimination are wrong, rare, and always dealt with firmly.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe while using the internet. Older pupils know of the potential dangers involved in using computers and 'technology' generally. They explained that they would never give out personal details about where they live to anyone that they do not know over the internet, and that they would always report people for using bad language online.
- All pupils learn and understand the risks of e-safety, stranger danger and of the problems that can be caused by eating the wrong food, drinking and smoking.
- The school holds the 'Bike It' status and helps to ensure that all pupils know how to stay safe while on their bikes and crossing roads.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are determined to ensure that no pupil is disadvantaged because of their background or family circumstances. All pupils are given every opportunity to participate in all school activities and parents value the positive ethos of the school. Very effective school leadership has ensured that the strengths identified in the previous inspection have been sustained and extended. The school is well placed to move forward.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of what is working well and aspects that need attention. Priorities are accurate and teachers are clear about the strategic direction of the school,
- Checking on teaching has been a crucial factor in sustaining the quality of teaching during a time of several staffing changes. Teachers are very clear about what they need to do to improve and only a few aspects remain as aspects to improve. They have targets based on their performance as well as pupils' progress. This performance management is helping teachers to improve and is good. Teachers appreciate the professional development that they receive and opportunities to visit other schools to share good practice.
- The school's middle leadership team, though new, is very clearly focused. All middle leaders have improvement plans for their areas of responsibility that are regularly checked by senior leaders and governors. However, their use of data, to show exactly how much progress pupils make across each year-group, is not always effective. As a result there are times when establishing exactly how much progress individual pupils have made and where support is needed are not quite sharp enough.
- The school's new curriculum excites pupils through offering a 'WOW start' visit at the beginning of each new topic. This captures their interest, especially through role play. Reading and mathematics are promoted well across a range of subjects. However, this is not always the case in writing when basic skills and opportunities to write at length are not fully promoted across subjects.
- Pupils' social and moral development is exceptionally strong, as evidenced in the way they work together and care for each other. The school is working hard to develop pupils' cultural experiences through visits, and their spiritual development through inviting religious leaders to lead assemblies. However, pupils' knowledge of world faiths and life in multicultural Britain is still developing. The school's home-school liaison staff are working with parents in order to secure their support in this area.
- The school coordinates the Open Physical Education Network and provides opportunities for pupils to engage in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports such as gymnastics, tennis, TAG rugby, football, netball and tri-golf.
- The school has a very good relationship with the local authority, which has provided support in a number of areas, including helping to develop the role of middle leaders and leading on a whole-

school review of teaching and learning.

■ Safeguarding procedures are followed closely and meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Several members of the governing body are new to post. This is because the school has been eager to ensure that it has a good representation of members with a broad range of skills. Governors review data and are aware of aspects that could be stronger. They have taken advantage of various training, which is, for example, helping them to fully understand exactly how well all pupils are achieving.
- All governors have a class link, which gives them an insight into the quality of teaching and what is being done to raise standards. They have taken decisive action to eradicate inadequate teaching and endorsed training that has improved teaching.
- Governors know that teaching assistants, one-to-one support and opportunities to participate in a wide range of school trips, are all helping to drive up standards and make a difference for those pupils known to be entitled to support through the pupil premium.
- Governors know that the school's participation in, and reputation for, sports has improved significantly. They have fully endorsed the school's use of the physical education and sports fund to pool resources and coordinate a partnership of 43 local schools to, for example, share and plan the activities and coaching skills of a physical education specialist.
- Governors hold the headteacher to account for raising levels of attainment and do not agree to pay awards or promotions for teachers unless they achieve their targets.

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	124020
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	440873

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Dawson
Headteacher	Lisa Gulley
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2011
Telephone number	01782 234811
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