

Gilbertstone Primary School

Clay Lane, Birmingham, B26 1EH

Inspection dates 4–5 March 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.

- Pupils achieve well. Their progress is improving rapidly because leaders, managers and governors have ensured teaching is good across the school and sometimes outstanding.
- Staff share leaders' determination to improve the school and fully understand their own role in bringing this about.
- All subjects are taught well. The topics pupils are given stimulate their curiosity and make them want to learn more.
- Leaders manage teachers' performance very well. Their judgements of teaching quality are accurate and tied directly to how much teachers and other adults are helping improve achievement.
- Outstanding leadership and high quality teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure children make rapid gains in learning and personal development, especially in the Nursery.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also outstanding. Pupils who find learning difficult, for whatever reason, are supported exceptionally well and make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- The school is using pupil premium funding effectively to help the pupils who qualify for it to make at least good progress.
- Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to help pupils make really rapid progress.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently show pupils how to improve, and pupils do not always do corrections to show that they understand where they have gone wrong.
- Pupils do not know their targets well enough or how to use them in different subjects to help them make faster progress.
- Pupils make less progress in mathematics than in reading and writing. Mathematical skills are not promoted enough in different subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 34 lessons. Senior leaders joined inspectors in six of the observations.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, sampled guided reading sessions and sessions where pupils were being taught phonics (letters and the sounds they make), and examined the work in pupils' books.
- Meetings were held with two governors, with senior and subject leaders, the school's inclusion team and various groups of pupils.
- A discussion also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the data the school collects on pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, and a document outlining the school's own judgements about how well it is doing.
- Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection, were also reviewed.
- The team took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the school's own parent survey. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents directly to gain their views at first hand.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Paula Rose	Additional Inspector
Dennis Brittain	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of those who speak English as an additional language, are above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium, is broadly average. This funding in this school is for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has its own breakfast and after-school clubs, known as the 'Hub'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and improve pupil progress, across the school by:
 - making sure that all marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve
 - ensuring teachers require pupils to do corrections and check that they understand where they have gone wrong
 - making pupils pay more attention to their targets for reading, writing and mathematics and encouraging them to reach those targets faster by keeping them in mind at all times.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by providing pupils with more opportunities to use their mathematical skills in practical, problem-solving activities, and by promoting mathematical learning better in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All pupils, from the least to the most able, make good progress in reading and writing and also, although less consistently, in mathematics, and, increasingly, across a range of other subjects.
- Children start school in the Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age but with weaknesses in language and communication. Their good and sometimes outstanding progress ensures they are ahead of where they are expected to be when they start Year 1.
- Pupils in Year 1 were well ahead of pupils nationally in the phonics screening check in 2013. Pupils enjoy reading. They understand what they read, and they read well throughout the school.
- In 2013, pupils in Year 2 were ahead of pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and well ahead in writing. The work of pupils currently in Year 2 shows that standards are continuing to rise, as they have done in recent years, and pupils of this age are further ahead than they were at this point last year.
- Last year's Year 6 test results showed a dip in standards and in progress. School data and pupils' work from last year suggests that pupils did, in fact, make good progress but some did not perform as well in the tests as their work indicated they should. Well-thought-out plans are in place to ensure that pupils will be more confident when taking the tests this year and that their results will better reflect their progress through the school.
- Throughout the school, pupils use their writing skills well in different subjects. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are usually accurate but pupils do not always take enough care with their handwriting and the presentation of their work. In reading and writing, pupils currently in Year 6 are already a term ahead of where they are expected to be at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make better progress in reading and writing than in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. In mathematics, standards are about a term behind where they are expected to be at the end of Year 6. However, pupils are making increasingly rapid progress because the school is successfully improving their ability to calculate quickly and move from one mathematical concept to another.
- Pupils do not use their mathematical skills well to investigate and solve problems in mathematics, or in different subjects, largely because they have too few opportunities to do so. The school recognises that this limits progress in mathematics. It has an action plan to tackle the issue but it has not yet been fully implemented.
- The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is relatively small. Most make good progress and although there remain gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils, these are closing rapidly. They are currently just over a term behind other pupils in reading and writing and two terms behind in mathematics. Nationally, they are over two terms behind in each area.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress. They benefit from the expertise of specifically trained teaching and support staff.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in learning to speak,

read, understand and write in English. These pupils benefit from the additional support they receive to help them overcome any language difficulties they might have, and consequently learn well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are keenly aware of pupils' different background and abilities and regularly modify teaching to suit what each group, and sometimes individuals, need to do to make good progress. Their planning and the work in pupils' books show that this good practice is well-established across the school.
- Teachers have concentrated on closing gaps in pupils' learning rather than on adhering strictly to any one particular approach or programme of work. This is increasingly helping all groups of pupils to make better progress, especially in mathematics.
- In-depth training has ensured the school now has several staff with specific expertise in mathematics, which they are sharing with other staff. As a result, the teaching of mathematics, and consequently pupils' learning, is improving rapidly across the school. Reading and writing are taught consistently well.
- Staff listen to pupils, show that they value their responses, and frequently turn incorrect answers into positive learning experiences. Consequently, pupils are prepared to 'have a go' at answering, confident that staff or other pupils will help them if they are wrong.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and this contributes to pupils' good progress.
- Teaching and support staff are particularly good at drawing all pupils into each session by, for example, questioning and probing their understanding, and taking it further. Staff constantly encourage pupils to concentrate and reflect on their learning and find ways to improve it, for example, by helping each other when they are stuck, before asking an adult for help.
- All teachers use the school's agreed colours and symbols for marking pupils' work and pupils fully understand them. However, there are not always enough comments in pupils' work that show them how to improve their work, and when they do occur, they are often not clear enough to take pupils forward.
- Pupils are not routinely encouraged to do their corrections to show that they have understood where they went wrong. They know they have targets, but are not sure what the targets are, or what they need to do to reach them, and marking does not help them in this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are happy at school. They enjoy learning, concentrate well and are eager to succeed. Their excellent attitudes to learning are fostered exceptionally well from the moment they start school. In Nursery and Reception, as in most of the rest of the school, children work well on their own or with others, and quickly become fully absorbed in their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The vast majority of parents are happy with what the school does for them and their children. Pupils say they feel safe and show they know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using different

forms of technology, such as computers and mobile phones.

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils say it is almost always so and, where it falters, it is 'silly' rather than 'poor'. Pupils follow the school rules well, understand the need for them and respond quickly to instructions. They respect staff and each other and appreciate the systems of rewards and sanctions that keep behaviour good.
- The school does much to foster good behaviour. Its involvement in the PATHS (Providing Alternative Thinking Strategies) project is just one example of how it works with pupils and parents to improve behaviour and give pupils a sense of responsibility. Pupils rise well to the challenge inherent in the project, for example, taking their roles as PATHS pupil of the day, playground helpers or school councillors seriously, and making a good contribution to school life.
- Most parents agree that the school deals well with occasional incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including bullying. Inspectors investigated the concerns of the small number of parents who disagreed, and concluded that those concerns were unfounded. The school logs show that the small numbers of bullying or racist name-calling incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. These incidents are reducing year on year.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about sport and exercise. Participation in the many sporting activities on offer is good, and pupils enjoy the competitive element as they strive to do better each time.
- Attendance is above average. The school is extremely vigilant in checking reasons for absence straight away if parents have not been in touch by the close of registers. It also keeps a close check on pupils who are absent for longer periods due to medical reasons, including when they are receiving their education in hospital.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders, including governors, have high expectations of staff and pupils. Disappointed by last year's Year 6 test results, they very quickly analysed the reasons for them, and set about ensuring teachers were filling gaps in pupils' learning. The actions they have taken are securing faster progress for the pupils.
- The school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate and well-founded. The school improvement plan that arises out of it sets clear priorities to improve pupils' progress, and there are clear links between these and the targets set for teaching and support staff during reviews of their performance.
- The management of staff performance is robust, and the leadership team's evaluation of teaching and learning is accurate. Areas for improvement are followed up with support and professional training that are improving teaching and therefore pupils' learning.
- The school's decision to use the pupil premium to employ part-time experienced teachers to help eligible pupils do as well as they can is leading to better achievement for these pupils. They are rapidly catching up with the other pupils.
- The management of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is outstanding. Provision is consistently well-monitored to ensure the pupils' best possible progress at any given time, and to help them participate as fully as they can in all aspects of school life.

- Provision in all the different subjects is well planned. Literacy skills are promoted effectively in each subject; this is done less well in mathematics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered exceptionally well because the PATHS approach permeates everything the school does. Forest School, visits, visitors and a wide range of well-attended additional activities in and outside of the normal school day further enhance pupils' learning and personal development.
- The learning programmes for children in Nursery and Reception are exceptionally well planned. Leadership and management are outstanding in this age group and therefore children are making increasingly good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in all areas.
- The school successfully fosters equality of opportunity for all pupils and is robust in eliminating discrimination or harassment of any sort. Safeguarding procedures, including those for child protection, meet current government requirements. The school goes the extra mile to ensure that it is a safe place for pupils and staff.
- The school is using the sports funding grant to extend the range of opportunities available to pupils. It focuses on two areas in particular; one is for children in Nursery and Reception, to develop positive attitudes from an early age. The other is an initiative to improve individual fitness across the age ranges in the areas of agility, strength, balance and cardio. Both include training for staff so that what is started can be sustained.
- The local authority provides an appropriately low level of support for the school because it is confident in the school's own ability to improve. The school uses the expertise from the local authority to support the inclusion team in its drive to get the best possible support for the pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know and understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They understand data and use their considerable expertise to support and challenge the school to improve. They support the headteacher in making decisions about teachers' pay and manage the headteacher's performance well. They are aware of the difference that the quality of teaching can make to pupils' learning and know that only good teaching should be rewarded.
 - Governors have made sensible decisions about how to use the pupil premium funding and the sports funding now available to the school. They have stringent measures in place to evaluate the effectiveness of both. They hone their skills by participating in an appropriate range of training, and gather their information through visits to school, examination of assessment data, and discussions with staff, pupils and parents.

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	103201
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	440486

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	469
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Hall
Headteacher	Ceri Crosskey
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2012
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