

# Castle Bromwich Junior School

Hurst Lane North, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, B36 0HD

## Inspection dates

27–28 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Standards have been below average in mathematics for the past two years and are not improving fast enough.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations for their pupils. This has led to too few pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, making good progress in reading and mathematics during their time in the school.
- Some teachers do not expect enough of more-able pupils and provide work that is too easy, which slows their progress.
- School leaders have not secured steady and consistent improvement in teaching since the last inspection. Until recently, their strategies have not been effective in improving attainment or pupils' rates of progress sufficiently.
- The school's view of its own performance is not always realistic. Governors do not have an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing and this limits their ability to hold the school to account.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They learn to help themselves and help each other.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and results from teachers' use of consistent rules and rewards and familiar routines in all classes.
- Pupils write at length and with confidence. They strengthen their writing skills further in a wide range of subjects and achieve standards above those found nationally.
- Pupils show pride in their work. It is well presented and they are eager to share it with others.
- Pupils' social development is rapid as a result of the carefully planned activities they are given in lessons, their own good behaviour and attitudes in play times and the range of clubs and activities available to them.
- The school's local partnerships and its links with other countries throughout the world help to broaden pupils' horizons.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with the two headteachers. In addition, the inspection team looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to younger pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 76 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View.
- The inspection team examined the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Greevy

Additional Inspector

Carol Deakin

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Castle Bromwich Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the inspection the school was led by a joint headship, with two headteachers, one of whom is about to retire and the other acting as 'headteacher-designate'.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and thereby raise attainment, by ensuring all teachers:
  - have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and set work that is challenging and makes them think hard, especially the more-able pupils
  - provide further support for those who are not progressing fast enough in their reading by developing their comprehension skills across a wider range of stories and non-fiction texts, so that they quickly begin to catch up
  - extend pupils' skills in mathematics and ensure they make more rapid progress by providing all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, with opportunities to practise these skills in other subjects.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school, including its governance, by
  - ensuring senior leaders evaluate how well the school is performing more accurately and check the impact of planned strategies more effectively and frequently
  - ensuring that governors develop a better understanding of the data on pupils' results relative to other schools so that they hold school leaders robustly to account for the school's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils generally start in Year 3 with standards that are broadly average overall with a larger proportion of pupils than nationally having reached the higher levels. Some pupils arrive with good basic reading skills but are less accurate when answering the comprehension questions that are included in the national tests. Pupils go on to achieve standards at the end of Year 6 that are only broadly average in reading and mathematics, and this means they do not accelerate in their progress from their equally average starting points as quickly as they should.
- In the last three years the proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading and in mathematics from Year 3 to Year 6 has dipped to below that found nationally. Progress in writing, however, is good and has improved to being above that found nationally. Pupils currently at the school are now making much better progress in reading and mathematics as they move from year to year and continue to make good progress in writing.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils, particularly the more-able, have not been high enough and the proportions reaching the higher levels have consequently also been below those found nationally. In 2013 only one pupil achieved the highest level in mathematics. School records suggest that more pupils are on track to reach the higher levels this year, with many Year 6 pupils currently working at this level.
- The progress in each year group of those who have special educational needs requires improvement; their progress is not fast enough, given their starting points. For example, the school has only recently identified areas of mathematics in which these pupils require additional support. In other respects, the general levels of care provided by the school for pupils who have special educational needs are of a high standard and their welfare is carefully overseen by leaders with specific responsibilities for them.
- The gap in the attainment of pupils in Year 6 supported by the pupil premium and others in the school widened from 2012 to 2013, by four months in mathematics but remained the same in English. School records show that these gaps in reading, writing and in mathematics are closing in other year groups, including the current Year 6. This is as a result of the school using this funding to provide additional support for these pupils who receive particular consideration in teachers' planning and in 'booster' sessions. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Pupils say that they feel they are making better progress because they understand their work better. They also say they feel more confident, both in information technology and in other subjects, because of the good use they now make of computers and tablets. Evidence in their books supports this view.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, since the previous inspection, there has been too much teaching that was not good enough. Recently, there have been improvements in the quality of teaching, resulting in better progress for pupils currently at the school but it is too early to know how well these improvements will be sustained over time. No inadequate teaching was observed by inspectors.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not as good in mathematics as they are in

English. As a result, the level of challenge offered to pupils, particularly those who are more-able, is sometimes too low. Pupils are too often set work that repeats basic skills they already have rather than extending them, and which does not develop their ability to apply these skills in subjects other than mathematics.

- While the literacy skills of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now well supported by good teaching, until recently there has not been sufficient focus on supporting their progress in mathematics. Teachers are, however, now giving greater attention to the development of these pupils' mathematics skills in specific small group sessions.
- The teaching of writing is good and teachers successfully extend pupils' writing skills by setting them writing tasks in other subjects, such as history and science. For example, when learning about the Second World War, pupils wrote letters to the Nazis asking them why they persecuted the Jews, taking the opportunity to reinforce important messages about tolerance and discrimination.
- Smaller 'booster' groups are used effectively for pupils who start with low levels of attainment and who need to strengthen basic skills. The pupils make very good progress in these sessions. They are fully absorbed in their work and confidently ask teachers questions to check their understanding.
- The marking of pupils' work has improved, with all teachers adopting a new system this year. Pupils find it clear and helpful and understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Experienced and expert support staff are used to good effect by class teachers. While some give one-to-one assistance to individual pupils, others work effectively with a wide variety of groups of all abilities.
- Pupils talk enthusiastically about their lessons and have very positive views of their teachers. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills, to which they respond readily and enthusiastically.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good around the school and in lessons. It is often exemplary. Any disruption to lessons is rare and managed swiftly and effectively by staff, who all use a consistent system of rewards and sanctions. The familiarity of routines helps to create a calm and well-ordered school in which pupils can thrive.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. This is evident in their eagerness to share and show their work, in the neat presentation of work in their books and the trouble they go to in order to produce high quality homework. They also like to appear smart in their uniform, something that is particularly evident in the pride with which members of the school council wear their blue sweatshirts.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet current requirements. During the inspection all Year 5 pupils attended effective workshops run by 'Childline' and commented to inspectors that they enjoyed them and learned from them.
- Pupils say they feel safe and happy in school. They are well aware of how to keep safe, including when using the internet and social media. Pupils know about the various forms that bullying

might take and what to do if they encounter it.

- The school ensures that all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, are well cared for. Pupils understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and take part in many physical activities. The school ensures that those most in need of these activities are encouraged to take part and their progress is carefully evaluated. Adults carry out regular risk assessments to ensure that pupils are safe, including when they leave the school on visits. School leaders monitor carefully any incidents of poor behaviour or accidents.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and has been for the last three years. It is improving as a result of the school employing a learning mentor with specific responsibility for attendance and a family worker. Pupils who receive additional funding and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have had less good attendance than other pupils in the past but this is improving. The school works closely with families and outside agencies, following up absences rigorously.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who have social or emotional difficulties are well supported by the school's learning mentor. A play-worker is also employed by the school to help build confidence and self-esteem with any pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The number of exclusions has declined from 2011 and where they have occurred they have often involved pupils with specific behavioural needs.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because attendance is only average and there are isolated incidents where the behaviour of a few pupils facing complex emotional challenges is not always good enough.

### **The leadership and management**

### **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics, are not consistently good. Senior leaders have not always successfully communicated high expectations for pupils' achievement.
- The school's own judgements of its own performance, particularly in comparison to other schools nationally, are not always realistic or critical enough. Senior leaders have brought about improvements but these have been too slow to have an impact on pupils' achievement in the most recent national tests.
- The school is currently being led jointly by the two headteachers and the carefully planned transfer of leadership has minimised any disruption to the work of the school. However, in the last three years there have been many changes to the school's staffing. This has led to the use of cover teachers with some disruption to pupils' learning. Newly qualified teachers have taken time to grow into their roles. There has, however, been a steady improvement in the quality of teaching due to a high quality of monitoring by school leaders and a well-planned programme of staff training. Any underperformance is now tackled swiftly and there is a clear and well-understood link between staff performance and progress on the pay scale.
- Leaders have now correctly identified the main improvement issues and are working closely with the governing body to improve the school. The key issues have been tackled, with significant improvements being made in writing across the curriculum. Leaders are now taking more effective steps to improve teaching and this is evident in the improved progress of current

pupils. The school recognises, however, that these improvements need to be sustained over time.

- The previous inspection report identified a need to develop the roles of subject and year leaders. This work has been completed and the school's consistent application of its policies, such as the new approach to marking, is due to close monitoring by all school leaders and managers. They also play an important role in the school's detailed tracking of pupils' progress.
- Subjects and topics are appropriately planned and well-structured and are based around creative themes that pupils enjoy exploring. Pupils' experiences are enhanced through visits, visitors and after-school clubs.
- The school demonstrates a strong commitment to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of its pupils. Much of this work focuses on broadening horizons and raising aspirations. Pupils celebrate their achievement in assemblies that also give time for reflection and school values of right and wrong are frequently addressed in lessons.
- Pupils' social skills are well developed by the school. Pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures and beliefs in Britain and the world are reinforced through the school's partnerships with a city school in the midlands and schools in The Gambia and China.
- The school makes good use of additional funding for physical education through employing a specialist teacher to develop pupils' skills and those of other staff. The school is a centre for the arts and all pupils are involved in music, drama and dance activities in the classroom, after school and in performances, for example at the Birmingham Symphony Hall.
- The professional support from the local authority has not succeeded in improving teaching and achievement enough in the past. It has, however, been more effective in its support for the school's recent drive to bring about further improvement.
- The school works well with parents and makes sure they are well informed through newsletters, curriculum meetings and annual reports on their children's progress. Of the small number who responded to the online Parent View survey, the very large majority agreed that they would recommend the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have a reasonable knowledge of the quality of teaching. They monitor the school's finances carefully, including the use of pupil premium funding and the additional funding for sport. However, they are not sufficiently trained in and do not have a good enough knowledge of pupils' rates of progress in school or how these compare nationally. They are involved in setting targets for the headteacher and are aware of a similar process for staff. Consequently, they have a secure knowledge of how the performance of staff links to increases in salary. They make sure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place in order to keep pupils and staff safe.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104066
<b>Local authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	440510

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	475
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rob Moon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Backhouse and Sarah Hobden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 October 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 747 2247
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