

Bhylls Acre Primary School

Bhylls Lane, Castlecroft, Wolverhampton, WV3 8DZ

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2014

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.

- Achievement is inadequate. There has been a decline in achievement in Key Stage 1 and standards are now below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The amount of progress made by pupils varies considerably, and in some classes and subjects it is inadequate.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are not high enough. They do not use assessment information well enough to plan and set work at the right level of difficulty for pupils of different ability.
- Leaders have not been successful in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Leaders have not been effective in checking and improving teaching in different subjects in order to raise achievement. This means that leaders lack the capacity to improve the school.
- Leaders, including governors, have not provided sufficient high quality training for teachers or enabled them to learn from good practice beyond the school.
- Governors do not have sufficient skills to know whether teaching is effective and pupils are doing as well as they should.
- Pupils do not always pay attention in lessons. They occasionally shout out, chat or daydream. This slows down their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides a welcoming environment for pupils, who say that they enjoy school and feel safe.
- Attendance has improved and is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or part-lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, a teacher, three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and also talked to pupils informally at break times and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked closely at the work in their books.
- Inspectors visited an assembly and observed playtime and lunchtime activities.
- There were 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors held informal discussions with some parents and looked at the results of the school's own parent survey.
- Inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation and information about pupils' progress as well as monitoring records and school policies.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Morag Kophamel, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jenny Edginton

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, 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

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding given to schools for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from families in the armed forces.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action, and through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs, are lower than average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post since 2012 and will be leaving the school at the end of the spring term. There are no other senior leaders.
- Since the autumn term the school has been supported by a Local Leader of Education (a successful headteacher from a local school).
- Two teachers were absent at the time of the inspection. These classes were being taught by supply teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' progress accelerates, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - use accurate assessment information to plan and provide engaging and challenging activities that build on what pupils already know, understand and can do
 - use correct grammatical terms when teaching writing, provide stimuli for writing that enthuse and motivate pupils, particularly boys, and ensure that pupils complete a good volume of work in the time provided
 - give younger pupils suitable reading books to build up their phonic skills
 - ensure that pupils learn to form letters correctly, develop neat and consistent handwriting and take pride in the presentation of their work
 - carefully check pupils' work in mathematics lessons, and quickly move pupils on to new learning as soon as they are ready
 - give pupils clear guidance when marking their work so that they learn from their mistakes and know what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - establishing a leadership structure and team that has the capacity to drive the necessary improvements
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels develop the necessary skills in monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching
 - ensuring that teaching and support staff receive high quality training in order to develop their skills

- assessing the impact of the support and guidance provided to pupils
- improving the curriculum through giving pupils more opportunities to apply their calculations skills in solving mathematical problems
- developing the skills of the governing body in evaluating pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching, so that it can hold school leaders to account more effectively for the impact of their work.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved. This should include a focus on the use and impact of pupil premium funding. Ofsted has made recommendations for action on governance to the authority responsible for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 has declined since the previous inspection. In 2013, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 was below the average for all schools nationally in reading and mathematics, and in writing no pupil reached this level.
- Pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Key Stage 2 have previously been broadly similar to pupils nationally except in writing. However, the proportions of pupils currently in Key Stage 2 who are making expected progress are much lower. In Years 4, 5 and 6 over a third of pupils are not making expected progress in mathematics, and around a quarter in reading and writing.
- Achievement in writing was identified as an area for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Since then standards in writing at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 have declined. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not make as much progress in writing as pupils nationally. Boys make slower progress in writing than girls.
- Some recent improvements to teaching are beginning to result in improved progress, particularly in Year 2 and Year 3 but this is not consistent and has not been sufficient to reverse the overall decline in standards.
- Most pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are at least typical for their age. The proportions of pupils reaching and exceeding the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, has increased in most areas of learning and compares favourably with national averages. However, in some areas the proportions exceeding the goals remain lower than the national average and in writing, no pupil exceeded the Early Learning Goal.
- In most lessons pupils are keen to learn and listen well to their teachers' explanations and instructions. However, in a small number of lessons poor behaviour and inattention mean that teachers have to repeat information or stop teaching to settle pupils down and this slows learning.
- More-able pupils do not all make the progress they should because the work set for them in lessons is not sufficiently challenging.
- The progress of the small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not very different to that of other pupils. A similar proportion do not make expected progress.
- School information shows that in the last school year more than a third of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium did not make expected progress in writing and mathematics. There were not enough eligible pupils in Year 6 in 2013 to comment on their achievement without identifying individuals.
- The school's use of the school sports funding is leading to more pupils regularly engaging in physical activity and participating in a range of sports including competitions.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching has not been effective in securing good progress for all classes and groups of pupils. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and over time.
- Teachers do not use the information they have on what pupils already know, understand and can do to plan and provide activities that help pupils learn well. This means that the work given to pupils is not always at the right level. For example, in some classes, more-able pupils complete work that is too easy for them.
- In writing lessons, teachers do not always use correct grammatical language when referring to punctuation or to different word groups. In some classes, writing tasks do not stimulate pupils' imagination or motivate them to write more than a few sentences.
- Teachers have become more systematic in the way that they teach younger pupils about phonics (the sounds that letters make). However, many of the reading books provided for pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 are not suitable as they do not allow pupils to practise and develop their phonic skills. Reading books are sent home for pupils to read with their parents but these are sometimes not changed for up to two weeks.
- In mathematics, teachers do not check pupils' understanding and accuracy frequently enough within lessons. This means that some, particularly the more-able pupils, complete many examples of the same type of calculation when they could have been moved on to more challenging work.
- Some marking gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. However, this good practice is not consistently carried out; in some classes errors and misunderstandings are not identified and followed up in teachers' comments, slowing pupils' progress. In some books, basic errors in spelling and punctuation go uncorrected and so persist.
- The presentation of pupils' work is not given sufficient priority in some classes. The teaching of handwriting, including basic letter formation for the youngest pupils, is not effective: incorrect letter formation mixed capital and lower case letters and reversal of letters are common.
- The explanations given by teachers are generally clear and some ask questions well to check pupils' understanding. However, teachers do not have high enough expectations of the amount of work that pupils should produce in a lesson. Pupils are sometimes slow to get started on their work and this is not challenged by teachers.
- A teacher supports the relatively few pupils who are known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium on a one-to-one basis. She liaises with class teachers and provides additional support or challenge in reading, writing and mathematics. Since the start of this initiative earlier in the year, the number of eligible pupils making at least expected progress has increased slightly but remains inadequate.
- The few teaching assistants generally provide good support for individuals and groups in lessons but their impact on pupils' progress varies depending on the appropriateness of the work set by the teacher.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Behaviour in lessons varies. In a small number of lessons there are instances of low-level misbehaviour. For example, pupils sometimes shout out, chat, daydream or waste time. Some pupils told inspectors that very occasionally the silliness of a

few pupils can distract them from their learning.

- Pupils' behaviour around school and in the playground is generally good. Pupils usually display good manners and were confident when talking to inspectors. Pupils were keen to explain that the recent introduction of new active zones in the playground, along with the introduction of pupil play leaders, has been very successful. Pupils and staff agree that lunchtimes are now calmer and more enjoyable.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The great majority of parents who spoke to inspectors and those who completed the online questionnaire are confident that their children are safe in school and that behaviour is well managed.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that adults in school care about them and listen to them if they are worried or upset. Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They say that racist or homophobic name calling is extremely rare and is treated very seriously. They have a good understanding of ways to stay safe when using the internet and mobile phones
- Procedures for following up absence are thorough and attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Capacity for improvement is limited because leaders and governors have not been successful in tackling inadequate achievement or in addressing the inequalities that arise from differences in teaching between classes. This means that they have not ensured that all pupils are well taught.
- Leaders and governors have not been effective in tackling the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Teachers' assessment information has not always been accurate and so previous judgements about pupils' progress have sometimes been inaccurate. Improved systems for managing and analysing this information are resulting in more secure and consistent judgements.
- Leaders and governors have not made appropriate provision for teachers' continuing training. Teachers have had few opportunities to attend training or to learn from good and outstanding practice in other schools.
- School leaders have not been successful in eliminating the occasional poor behaviour and inattention that occur in a small number of lessons.
- The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Since his appointment, some of the initiatives he has introduced have had a positive impact on raising achievement for some pupils. For example, in 2013 there was a significant increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. More recently, the proportion of pupils making at least expected progress is beginning to rise in some classes. However, the school's capacity for further improvement is inadequate because other leaders, including governors, have not been effective in improving teaching and securing good progress for all pupils. Their skills in monitoring, evaluating and improving the work of the school are underdeveloped.
- The curriculum for mathematics does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in solving problems.

- The wider curriculum includes a good range of subjects and pupils talk positively about some of the topics they have enjoyed. Visits out of school, and special themed days in school, enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils benefit from a good range of additional clubs and activities.
- Primary school sports funding is being used to employ a member of staff who is developing her expertise in physical education (PE) and is sharing this with other staff in PE lessons. She is also running a range of clubs and lunchtime activities designed to get pupils active and engaged in sport. This is a relatively recent initiative but already more pupils are engaging in regular physical activity.
- Parent View responses and discussions with parents show that they find the headteacher very approachable and willing to listen to them. Several gave examples of problems that he had quickly and sensitively sorted out.
- The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' social, moral, spiritual and personal development. Staff provide a supportive and welcoming environment and encourage pupils to develop a good understanding of right and wrong and to think about the strengths and needs of the school community.
- The headteacher and other staff place a high priority on keeping pupils safe. For example, staff are carefully checked to ensure that they are suitable to work with children and effective measures are taken for allowing visitors onto the premises.
- The local authority has given the school only minimum support in the past. However, in response to its own analysis of school information and the headteacher's concerns, more intensive support has been provided from the start of the current academic year. In the autumn term joint lesson observations were carried out by the headteacher and a local authority representative and a meeting was held with governors to consider information about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. The local authority now has an accurate understanding of the urgent need for improvement and have arranged for support to be provided by a Local Leader of Education. Support and training have been provided in order to improve teaching in English and mathematics and so raise achievement. This support is recent and is not yet having a measurable impact on pupils' progress. Governors do not believe that the school has been well supported by the local authority, particularly with regard to the school's financial difficulties and in their current task of recruiting a new headteacher.
- The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is inadequate. Governors have not done enough to strengthen and support school leadership and, as a consequence, capacity to improve is limited. Governors vary in their understanding of the school's current situation. Some have an accurate understanding of pupils' achievement in different parts of the school but not all understand how to use national information about pupils' achievement to evaluate the school's performance. Minutes of meetings of the governing body provide little evidence that governors provide challenge or hold leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. They have an understanding of how pupil premium money is spent but are not clear on the impact of this work on pupils' achievement. In recent years the school has had a significant budget deficit and governors have had to make difficult decisions in order to improve the financial situation. Governors ensure that arrangements for managing the performance of teachers, including the headteacher, are appropriate and are linked to pay. However, they have not been successful in tackling underperformance. Governors fulfil their statutory obligations for safeguarding pupils.

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	124139
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	440601

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Cox
Headteacher	Jonathan Pygott
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2010
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