

# Blackwell Community Primary and Nursery School

Primrose Hill, Blackwell, Alfreton, DE55 5JG

**Inspection dates** 3–4 April 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

- Attainment in Year 6 in 2013 declined to average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics was below average.
- Year 2 pupils underachieved in 2013. Pupils' progress in other year groups has been too variable, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils do not have good opportunities to develop some mathematical skills.
- Teachers sometimes do not expect enough of the most-able pupils.
- Over time teaching has not been good enough to ensure that pupils achieve well. Assessment has not been used rigorously to close gaps in some pupils' learning.
- Teachers sometimes do not question pupils or practise new ideas with them in sufficient depth in order to accelerate their progress.
- Teachers do not regularly check pupils' understanding in lessons to let them know how well they are doing and what they need to do next.
- Some subject and other leadership roles are not fully developed across the school. This limits the contribution these leaders make to checking teaching and pupils' progress and to improving the school's effectiveness.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has led the school effectively through a time of considerable discontinuity in staffing.
- Good new teachers are helping to improve pupils' attainment and rates of progress.
- Some pupils in Key Stage 1 who receive one-to-one support make rapid progress, especially in reading.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. The school ensures that pupils are kept safe. Attendance rates have risen.
- Governors visit the school often to gain first-hand knowledge of its work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in seven lessons taught by seven teachers or teaching assistants. Three of these lessons were observed together with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to a sample of Year 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, three governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the nine questionnaires completed by staff. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be published. However, the inspector took into account the results of the school's own recent surveys of parents' and pupils' views and spoke informally to some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; consultants' reports; the school improvement plan; the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for certain groups such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, is above 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 well above average. Many of these pupils have social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a single unit. Pupils in Years 1 are taught with Reception children in the afternoons. Pupils in Year 2 are taught in a single-age class. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in two mixed-age classes.
- All teachers working in Years 2 to 6 have joined the staff in the last eighteen months. The school has had to make temporary arrangements to cover recent absences of key staff.
- There is a Sure Start Children's Centre on the school site as well as before- and after-school clubs. Neither provision is managed by the school. These provisions were therefore not observed as part of this inspection.
- 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?

- Make teaching consistently good or better, by ensuring all teachers:
  - question pupils well to develop their reasoning skills and to extend their knowledge
  - practise new ideas and check pupils' understanding thoroughly
  - use assessment rigorously to close gaps in pupils' learning.
- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics by:
  - providing pupils with good opportunities to understand mathematical ideas and to carry out investigative and problem-solving tasks.
- Improve the achievement of the most-able pupils by making sure that:
  - all teachers have high expectations for them and consistently provide them with suitably challenging work
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - all leaders carry out robust checks on teaching and pupils' progress within their areas of responsibility to enable them to contribute fully to improving the school and raising pupils' achievement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was broadly average, but both standards and rates of progress slipped back from 2012 when pupils achieved well.
- In 2013 too few Year 6 pupils attained the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics. The decline in pupils' attainment was most marked in mathematics. Pupils know mathematical terms but make mistakes and are less confident when they have to draw comparisons, for example between different lengths of measurement, or apply their calculation skills to problem-solving tasks.
- Attainment in Year 2 has dropped over the last few years, partly due to staffing instability and some historic weaknesses in teaching. Year 2 pupils underachieved in 2013.
- Children join Nursery with levels of skills and aptitudes which are below those expected for this age. They make steady progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and join Year 1 with slightly below-average attainment. Very few children achieve the higher levels.
- Assessment records show that pupils' progress in other year groups has, over time, been inconsistent, especially in mathematics. Assessment has not been rigorous enough to ensure gaps in some pupils' knowledge have been identified quickly or tackled effectively.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2013 known to be eligible for the pupil premium for their performance to be compared without potentially identifying them. The progress of these pupils across the school is generally similar to that of their classmates, but relatively stronger in Key Stage 1, where the support is more effective.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve at least as well as their classmates. Staffing difficulties have prevented some support programmes from running; however, several of the school's strategies have been successful in improving these pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and attainment.
- Results in the Year 1 screening test for phonics (the sounds that letters make) improved considerably last year. Year 2 pupils, including the less able, understand letters and sounds well and read accurately.
- Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in writing has risen since the previous inspection and, due to staffing improvements, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are currently working a little above the levels expected for their age.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, staffing discontinuity and some weaknesses in teaching and assessment have affected the achievement of pupils, especially in Key Stage 1. These have harmed staff's capacity to plan securely to ensure pupils make consistently good progress.
- Over time teachers' expectations of pupils' work, especially the most able, have not been high enough. Not all lessons offer these pupils the level of challenge they need to extend their skills to perform really well.

- Pupils sometimes do not make the progress they are capable of because teachers do not always ask probing questions to develop their thinking skills and to extend their knowledge. New ideas are not explored or practised consistently well to enable pupils to tackle the work they do on their own accurately and to harness their positive attitudes effectively. Teachers often do not intervene to help pupils understand clearly what they have been learning and what they need to do next.
- A few good features of teaching were observed in Nursery and Reception but staff's questioning sometimes lacked sufficient variety to speed up children's progress and to challenge more-able children.
- Calculation skills are taught well in mathematics but pupils do not have good opportunities to help them understand mathematical relationships and ideas, to carry out investigations or to solve word problems.
- Teaching assistants often provide sensitive one-to-one assistance for pupils with a statement of special educational needs. On other occasions they are not used flexibly enough to accelerate pupils' learning.
- Key Stage 1 pupils who need extra help to enable them to keep up with their classmates make rapid progress, especially in reading, due to the excellent one-to-one tuition they receive. The progress that they make is sustained in whole-class lessons and results in notable improvements in their self-esteem and attitudes towards learning.
- Since September 2012, changes to the teaching staff have helped to improve the quality of teaching and rates of progress in some year groups. This was observed, for example in a Year 2 lesson, where the teacher's varied questioning enabled pupils to identify clearly the key features of a reading text.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage work successfully with children in supportive, encouraging ways. Their strong focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills prompts most children to make a positive contribution in lessons.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have increasingly mature attitudes. They interact well with each other in most lessons to discuss and to practise their learning. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, in particular, settle to learning quickly and are keen to answer the teachers' questions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can be relied upon to work unaided when staff are working with small groups. Staff manage pupils well and relationships are respectful.
- Pupils behave well in corridors and around school. They are careful not to drop litter or food in the dining hall. They listen attentively in assemblies and celebrate warmly each other's 'little successes' whether it be for good work or behaviour. They are friendly to each other and welcoming to visitors.
- Pupils report a few problems with behaviour. These issues mainly involve pupils whose challenging behaviour has caused them to be excluded from other schools. In most cases, the school's work with pupils who have difficulties managing their behaviour is successful.
- Pupils' attendance, which had been rising, slipped back a little last year. It has resumed its upward trend and is currently above average.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff have an up-to-date knowledge of pupils' social and medical needs. They use this information carefully in their work with outside agencies to keep a close check on pupils' welfare and achievement. Pupils are well supervised by staff at break-times. Parents, as indicated in the school's questionnaires, are satisfied with the school's efforts to ensure pupils' well-being in school.
- Pupils report that they have been well taught in how to stay safe, for example through visits from representatives of the local police and fire service, and 'Bikeability' training. Year 2 pupils explained clearly how unwise use of the internet could potentially cause them harm.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Discontinuity in staffing has hampered the school's efforts to drive improvement since the previous inspection. Some well-considered actions have been taken, under the headteacher's guidance, to improve pupils' literacy skills. Less attention has been given, until recently, to examining ways to improve pupils' numeracy skills.
  - Much of the responsibility for checking up on the school's work has been undertaken by the headteacher. Some subject and other leaders have not carried out timely, close checks within their areas of responsibility. Consequently, they do not have the detailed overview of pupils' performance across all key stages that they need in order to have a strong influence on the school's direction.
  - While the school collects a large amount of information on pupils' academic achievements, these assessment data are not always analysed, shared or used well enough to accelerate pupils' progress within individual key stages. The school ensures that there is no discrimination and promotes equal opportunities adequately.
  - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through the curriculum. Projects, such as 'hidden histories' enable pupils to gain an in-depth understanding and appreciation of key features of their local history and environment but some opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' knowledge of other cultures.
  - The local authority has been working with the school more closely since September 2013 when it was designated as a 'priority school'. It has accurately identified key areas where it will target an increased level of support from April 2014.
  - Although the first instalment of the national sports funding for primary schools was received late, the school has made suitably detailed plans to use it wisely to improve staff's skills. It has expanded the range of activities offered to pupils, for example by including 'tai chi' and gymnastics. Encouraging increases in participation rates and pupils' enthusiasm for sport have been recorded.
  - The school has shown its capacity to secure improvement by raising pupils' standards in writing in Key Stage 2. It has strengthened teaching considerably through recent appointments of skilled, experienced staff. This has resulted in improvements in pupils' achievement in key year groups and in the monitoring of pupils' work in English, although full consistency in pupils' progress across the school has not been achieved.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors know which of the school's actions have been successful in raising standards.

- Key governors have been involved with the school’s work for many years and know clearly the important role the school plays in serving the local community’s needs.
- Governors visit the school often to observe teaching and check how well new initiatives are working. Their reports are detailed and insightful. They support the school enthusiastically through their regular attendance at events and on school trips.
- Governors have a basic understanding of the school’s performance data but are keen to improve their skills so that they can ask more probing questions about how well pupils are doing.
- Governors have taken sensible decisions in appointing new staff and in allocating pupil premium funding to improving the early literacy and numeracy skills of eligible pupils.
- They review targets for the headteacher’s performance regularly and make sure that suitable procedures are followed when decisions are taken about staff pay rises.
- Governors make sure that the school’s systems for safeguarding meet current national requirements.

## 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>	112506
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	443827

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paul Bunning
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joy Thompson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 811281
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