

Briercliffe Primary School

Delamere Road, Briercliffe, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 2JU

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- From their starting points when they begin school to the end of Year 4, most pupils make expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but few make more than this.
- Information about what pupils already know and can do is not always used to set work at the correct level. Work is too easy for some pupils and too difficult for others.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they have learned in reading, writing and mathematics to their learning in other subjects.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent. Pupils do not always know what they do well, what they need to do to improve or have time to respond to teachers' advice.
- Not all senior and middle leaders check and evaluate teachers' work and the school's performance rigorously or accurately enough in order to drive forward improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Staff are yet not effectively held to account for their teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors do not yet hold senior leaders to account for providing them with relevant, up to date and accurate information.
- The impact of the pupil premium pupils on the achievement of eligible pupils is not monitored sharply enough by leaders and governors.

The school has the following strengths

- In the short time since his appointment, the headteacher has quickly established a very accurate view of the school's performance and knows precisely what is needed to improve teaching and achievement.
- The deputy headteacher has made an effective contribution to school improvement in the last four terms. More teaching is good and standards are rising.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress as a result of good teaching.
- Staff work as a team to provide a caring and welcoming environment. Pupils feel safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are courteous, well mannered and work well in lessons.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 17 lessons taught by 12 teachers and listened to pupils reading. A whole-school assembly was also observed.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, a local authority representative and groups of pupils. Inspectors also talked informally with pupils in the dining room and playground.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documents including: the school's own information about pupils' progress; plans for school improvement; the monitoring of learning and teachers' performance; organisation of the curriculum; safeguarding information and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors also took account of the 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), results of the school's own consultations with parents, discussions with parents before school and 22 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Allyson Ingall

Additional Inspector

Faheem Chishti

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a little larger than the average-sized school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for those children who are looked after by the local authority. Although below average, this proportion has risen steadily over the past three years.
- The very large majority of pupils are from White British families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for a little over three weeks. The deputy headteacher had been in post for around four terms.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is consistently good or better so that pupils make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - expectations of what pupils can do are high and pupils are clear what they are expected to learn from the activities they complete
 - teachers use the information about what pupils already know and can do to set work at the right level for pupils of different abilities
 - the marking of pupils' work and feedback to them indicates precisely what they need to do in order to improve their work and giving pupils opportunities to respond to teachers' advice
 - pupils of all ages use their mathematical skills to solve problems
 - pupils develop and apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across the different subjects and in the various activities provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, and governance by ensuring that:
 - the school's procedures for judging the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are rigorous and accurate
 - the school's systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress is used well by all staff so that they can be held to account for the performance of pupils in their class
 - governors are provided with relevant, up to date and accurate information so that they can hold senior leaders fully to account for their work
 - leaders and governors check carefully that the pupil premium funding leads to good achievement for these pupils across the school.

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

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium 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

- The achievement of pupils, while improving, is not yet consistently good for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and between Years 1 and 4. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in these year groups, given their starting points, are not high enough. Too few pupils make more than the expected rate of progress.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below what is typical for their age, particularly in literacy, personal and social skills. Staff ensure that children settle quickly into school life so that they become ready and eager to learn. Although children generally make good progress in their personal development, there are not enough opportunities for children to extend their reading, writing and mathematics skills within the various activities provided. Children leave the Reception class at levels which are below what is expected for their age and, as a result, achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1, although improving, is not yet good. Standards by the end of Year 2 have been rising overtime and, in 2013, were nearer to average, particularly in reading and mathematics although too few reached the higher Level 3. This is because tasks set do not sufficiently challenge pupils to work at the higher levels. However, the school's data and inspection evidence shows that the improving trend by the end of Year 2 is set to continue.
- Pupils' progress across Key Stage 2 is variable and therefore requires improvement. Good progress in Years 5 and 6 ensures that pupils reach broadly average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. However, progress in Years 3 and 4 is slower. Expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough to ensure they achieve well.
- Achievement in reading is improving. In 2012, a well-below average proportion of pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the phonics (letters and their sounds) screening check. Leaders quickly responded by strengthening the quality of teaching and an above average proportion met the standard in 2013. Pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make are good. Pupils say they enjoy reading books and stories. Even so, progress in reading is not consistently good because pupils do not always have enough chances to use their reading skills in their work.
- Good progress in Years 5 and 6 in writing ensures that many pupils are able to sustain an argument well through their extended writing. Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally accurate and this is helping to improve achievement in writing across the school. However, pupils' progress in writing is hampered because they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop and apply their skills when completing work in different subjects.
- Achievement in mathematics requires improvement because teaching is variable. In Year 6 in 2013, most pupils made the expected rate of progress but the proportion that did better than this was below average. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills across the different subjects or to solve mathematical problems.
- Boys do not achieve as well as girls. Boys' standards are below average both by Year 2 and 6. In Year 6 in 2013 for example, boys' attainment was around two terms behind girls; this gap is wider than the gap seen nationally. Leaders are taking good steps to improve boys' performance and this gap is now starting to narrow.
- In the past, pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, have made less progress than others. In Year 6 in 2013, for example, attainment of eligible pupils was approximately five terms behind other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics overall and a year behind similar pupils nationally. Although school data and inspection evidence shows that current pupils are doing better, leaders and governors do not yet check that the pupil premium is having a good enough impact on improving their achievement.
- The most able pupils make progress similar to other pupils. Some do better, particularly in Years 5 and 6 in mathematics where a few are on track to reach the highest level by the end of this school year. However, in other years, the most able are not always challenged to reach high enough levels, particularly in reading and writing.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs usually make progress similar to their peers. Their progress is stronger in Years 5 and 6 because teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of pupils' needs and provide learning tasks that get the best out of them.
- Although the school strives to promote equality of opportunity for its pupils, variances in progress between different year groups and continued gaps in the attainment between various groups for pupils means that their efforts to do so are not yet fully effective.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it requires further improvement as it is not consistently good over time. The quality of teaching still varies between different year groups.
- Information about what pupils already know and can do is not always used to plan activities at the right level for pupils of differing abilities. Work is sometimes too easy or too hard and tasks for all pupils often start at the same level and so pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Work in pupils' books shows that expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough and so they do not reach the standards they are capable of.
- New ways of marking pupils' work are in place. Pupils now have a better understanding of any mistakes they make. Not all staff however are applying the new methods to good effect. Some pupils are not clear enough about what they need to do in order to improve their work. Good advice is often offered but pupils are not always given the chance to respond.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Teaching of phonics has been strengthened; a new more systematic approach is now in place. Daily phonics sessions, for example, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are taught well. Highly skilled and well-deployed teaching assistants are also contributing to a picture of improved achievement.
- Pupils are often asked questions that help them make links with things they have learnt before. Sharp questioning about pupils' knowledge of sentence structure enabled pupils in Year 3/4 to develop a good understanding of the use of complex sentences. Although teaching of writing has some good aspects, achievement is hampered because pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their skills when completing work in the different subjects.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is not yet good enough to ensure children make good progress. Activities capture children's interests and they are eager to learn. Strong ongoing support ensures that progress in their personal skills is good. There is an appropriate balance between activities led by adults and those that children can choose for themselves but children's literacy and numeracy skills do not develop at a good rate because there are too few opportunities for them to develop them in the activities provided.
- Teaching is consistently good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils make good progress because they are challenged and are enthusiastic about learning. In mathematics, for example, pupils were keen to use their mathematical skills to investigate and to solve problems set at various levels of difficulty. This stimulating challenge deepened their understanding and, as a result, pupils, including the boys, made good progress. Boys however do not always make good progress because the activities provided do not always challenge or interest them enough. As a result, their concentration sometimes fades.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are encouraged to consider their actions, be thoughtful and care for others. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe and show growing levels of responsibility through their roles as lunchtime monitors and school councillors.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that their school is a safe place to be. Pupils are taught well to understand dangers, such as those of traffic and e-safety and understand they have a growing responsibility to keep themselves safe as they get older.
- Pupils enjoy school and happily work and play together. They have good relationships with their teachers and show positive attitudes to work. Boys sometimes lose concentration however

because they do not always find the work interesting or challenging enough.

- In lessons and around the school pupils' behaviour is generally good. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils agree that behaviour is good overall. They are very clear about the school's code of behaviour, its rewards and sanctions. They acknowledge there can be some instances of poorer behaviour but that these are quite rare, and that staff address them quickly.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take. They say that it can happen but that it is unusual. They know what to do if they experience it and know that staff will take immediate action and sort out any problems and so they feel safe. They recognise the vigilance of staff, particularly the new headteacher and deputy headteacher and can see improvements.
- Attendance is usually above average and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. The dip in 2013 reflected a very small group of pupils who were regularly absent. The school works cooperatively with families to improve attendance of these pupils. The learning mentor plays a key role in this.
- Parents' responses and discussions with inspectors indicate that the very large majority believe their children are looked after and cared for well. Inspectors agree.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders' actions have not led to good improvement in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- The headteacher is very clear about what exactly needs to be done to improve teaching and to drive improvement. The deputy headteacher has made an effective contribution to school improvement in the last four terms. Teaching and standards are improving steadily.
- Some senior and middle leaders are sometimes overly optimistic about what has been achieved since the last inspection. Arrangements to check and evaluate the quality of teaching are well established but lack rigour. This means that sometimes their view of teaching is inaccurate and is too generous. As a result, the leadership of teaching requires further improvement.
- Arrangements to manage teacher performance are also well established. Teachers are set clear targets for improving their classroom performance. However, these targets do not always reflect the expectations as set out in the national 'Teachers Standards'. Teachers are not yet held to account ensuring that their teaching and pupils' achievement improves and is good. In the past, pay awards have not always taken teacher performance into enough account.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' progress is tracked regularly. However, leaders are yet to ensure that this information is always used effectively to plan learning that builds well on what pupils already know and can do.
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- Leaders are yet to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to use and apply their basic reading, writing and mathematical skills across the different subjects and this prevents good progress.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to extend learning beyond lessons, such as through a good range of clubs, visits and visitors. They ensure the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through many aspects of school life.
- The primary school sports funding has been used to provide specialist coaching for pupils and to provide training for staff. A broader range of physical activities is now provided and pupils' participation in physical education and sport has increased.
- The local authority is supportive, working closely with the school since the last inspection to improve provision and to strengthen teaching. The impact of this support has not yet resulted in improvements in all year groups.
- The majority of parents are satisfied with the education their children receive, appreciating that their children are kept safe. A small minority who responded on Parent View disagreed that the school was well managed and would not recommend the school to another parent.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - As regular visitors to the school, members of the governing body are highly supportive.

Governors know that the pace of school improvement, teaching and pupils' achievement are not yet good. This is why they have been taking steps to strengthen their own skills, knowledge and effectiveness. For example, as a result of recent training, governors are now better placed to check the published data showing how well the school performs in comparison to other schools. They now place greater emphasis on checking the quality of the school's work for themselves. Even so, they are yet to hold leaders fully to account for making sure that the information they are given is relevant, up to date and accurate. This continues to hamper their efforts to challenge the headteacher and senior leaders.

- Governors are aware of how the additional funding for primary school sport and pupil premium funding are allocated but are not clear enough about how the impact upon pupils' achievements is measured and whether it is successful or not. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding, including the training of staff to keep pupils safe from harm.

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	119168
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	442394

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Foley
Headteacher	Robert Blanchet
Date of previous school inspection	18 December 2012
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