

Blakeley Heath Primary School

Sytch Lane, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, WV5 0JR

Inspection dates 4–5 June 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

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress is not consistently good. Some pupils eligible for additional government funding underachieve.
- Teaching is too variable in quality. Teachers do not ensure that pupils confidently develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- The work teachers set does not always enable the most-able pupils to learn as quickly as they could.
- Teachers' marking is not helping pupils to make swift improvements to their work.
- Support for pupils eligible for additional funding is not focused or checked closely enough to help them catch up with others.
- Planning for improvement is not focused sharply enough to enable leaders to judge accurately whether the actions they take to raise pupils' achievement and improve teaching are successful. Consequently, leaders do not prioritise carefully what they need to do next to take the school forward.
- Governors do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of the school's work to enable them to hold leaders fully to account for its performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Reception children make good progress.
- Teaching has improved over the last year. This is helping to increase most pupils' rates of progress.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. Attendance has risen. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The headteacher is taking positive action to improve the school. Improvements have been made to the checks the school makes on the progress of most groups of pupils.
- Local authority and other consultants are providing valuable support to ensure improvement, and staff are responding well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons taught by nine teachers.
- Some pupils in Year 2 were heard reading.
- Samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics were analysed in detail.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, three governors, and a local leader of education (LLE) from St Benedict's CofE Primary School, Wombourne.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the seven questionnaires completed by staff. They also considered the 45 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. An inspector spoke informally to some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants' reports; school improvement plans; 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
Jenny Digges	Additional Inspector
Michael Fox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools.
- The senior leadership team was reorganised in September 2013.
- The school has received support from the local authority, external consultants and a locally based LLE since the previous inspection.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- 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 below average.
- 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 also below average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. There are currently two classes in Years 2 and 4, and one class in each of the other year groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A before- and after-school club, 'Blakeley Bears', operates on the school site. This provision is managed by the governing body and was observed as part of this inspection.
- A privately managed nursery, 'Little Learners', operates on the school site. This provision is separately inspected.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better to accelerate pupils' rates of progress by ensuring all teachers:
 - plan learning carefully to ensure pupils confidently develop their literacy and numeracy skills
 - guide pupils' learning effectively
 - always provide pupils, particularly the most-able, with work that makes them think hard and learn as quickly as they can
 - make good use of marking to help pupils make swift improvements to their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - improvement plans enable leaders to judge accurately whether their actions are successful and help them to prioritise what they need to do next
 - support for pupils eligible for additional funding (pupil premium) is effective and checked carefully to ensure these pupils' good progress
 - governors acquire a better understanding of the quality of the school's work to enable them to hold leaders closely to account for its performance.

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.

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

- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been well-below average in recent years. It remained so in 2013 and too few pupils attained the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. However, most pupils in Year 6 achieved the nationally expected rate of progress from their below average starting points in Year 3.
- Year 6 pupils in 2013 known to be eligible for the pupil premium attained, on average, two years behind their classmates in mathematics and one year behind in reading and writing. Overall, this was a small improvement on the previous year. This year, eligible pupils are making reasonable progress in mathematics, but gaps in attainment between some of these pupils and their classmates remain, especially in reading and writing. Support programmes are not fully effective in meeting their learning needs.
- The most-able pupils sometimes spend too much time doing work which is too easy for them and this holds back their achievement in some year groups.
- Currently, achievement is improving across the school. Improvements in teaching have reversed the decline in achievement in Key Stage 2, although weaknesses remain in Year 4. Most Key Stage 2 pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making better progress than last year and are working at more challenging levels. Year 6 pupils' most recent assessments show that they are working in line with the latest national averages at both Level 4 and Level 5.
- Better opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length and to apply their calculation skills in problem-solving activities in mathematics are supporting pupils' improving rates of progress well.
- There is some variation from year to year in the levels of skills and aptitudes children have when they join Reception and the spread of attainment is wide. Whatever their starting points, children make good progress, especially in the development of their numeracy skills. Several children in this year's Reception class are currently reaching a good level of development.
- Progress is improving in Key Stage 1. Results in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make) were exactly in line with the national average last year. Current progress in phonics shows more pupils on track to exceed the 2013 standard. New initiatives to improve reading skills, such as 'Roald Dahl Week', are proving effective. Year 2 pupils, including the less able, are keen to read and do so confidently from books which are closely matched to their levels of ability.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Previous weaknesses in teaching, combined with insufficient checks on pupils' progress meant that a large number of pupils did not develop their command of literacy and numeracy skills securely. Consequently, pupils' achievement has not been good. Currently, pupils' achievement is improving from better teaching.
- Teachers do not consistently show that they have high enough expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve. Not all tasks encourage them to think hard and learn quickly. This was observed, for example, in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson where tasks set to check pupils' understanding were too easy for these pupils and did not test the depth of their understanding of the subject.

- Teachers provide pupils with learning activities that they enjoy, but pupils do not consistently develop their skills well enough. On a few occasions, teachers do not guide pupils' work well or remind pupils of the purpose of the learning set. When learning slows, teachers try to recover lost time by practising new learning hurriedly and, consequently, pupils make mistakes until the teacher intervenes.
- Teachers have adopted common procedures for marking pupils' work, for example, praising good points and identifying areas for improvement. However, not all teachers regularly check closely to see whether pupils act on their advice. Consequently, mistakes or weaknesses, for example in handwriting and presentation, are not always remedied quickly, which slows pupils' progress.
- There is clear evidence that teaching is improving steadily across the school. Firm action has been taken to eliminate inadequate teaching. Regular checks and more frequent assessment of pupils' work have increased staff accountability for pupils' performance. Teaching assistants have improved their questioning techniques since the previous inspection, and now provide more effective support for pupils' learning in lessons.
- Much teaching currently makes for lively learning and capitalises fully on the warm relationships which exist in lessons – reflecting pupils' positive attitudes. For example, excellent learning in a Year 2 reading lesson was observed when the teacher provided all groups of pupils with a clear purpose for their reading. All pupils were able to draw information from their texts and recorded it confidently and accurately. The additional adult was fully briefed and supported pupils well through helpful questioning.
- Teaching in Reception is good. For example, well-targeted questioning by adults challenged children to identify 'missing' numbers, to find sequences and to add and subtract accurately up to 20.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Reception children collaborate well, enjoy good relationships with staff and make expert use of computers to explain confidently what they are doing. They are not daunted by difficult puzzles.
- Routines are well established. For example, Year 1 pupils take care to sharpen their pencils in special bowls on the table. Pupils enter and leave classrooms and assemblies in a very orderly manner, requiring little direction from staff.
- Year 6 pupils display mature attitudes, quickly organising indoor activities to occupy themselves during 'wet' play-times. They respond instantly to requests to take up their positions as door monitors to help ensure movement on corridors runs smoothly.
- Pupils in all year groups enjoy learning and cooperate well with each other. There is minimal disruption in lessons. Most pupils are keen to respond and put their hands up quickly during question-and-answer routines. Pupils also behave well in assemblies, where they are quick to volunteer to carry out particular duties.
- Pupils have a strong sense of community and are welcoming to visitors. They greet visitors courteously, sing the school's songs loudly and tunefully and know all the words by heart.

- Pupils report that bullying and 'fall-outs' are rare because they get to know each other well in after-school and community activities. Boys say that arguments are usually restricted to football scores. Playtimes are usually well managed, although on a few occasions the lack of a zoned area for ball-games spoils the enjoyment for non-participants.
- Attendance rates have risen this year after a dip last year, although some pupils eligible for pupil premium funding attend less regularly than their classmates.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders have lobbied successfully to reduce the speed limit outside the school's gates. They have improved arrangements recently for pupils' safe exit from the before- and after-school club onto the playground. Stringent procedures are in place for monitoring visitors and for ensuring health, fire and safety procedures are observed.
- Leaders keep suitable behaviour logs and ensure that any pupils who have difficulty managing their behaviour or have other welfare needs receive the required support, either directly in school or through the involvement of outside agencies.
- Pupils feel safe in school and say that adults listen to 'both sides of the story' before taking firm and fair action to sort out any disputes. They are given clear advice in school about the safe use of social media.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The local authority, external consultants and the LLE have provided the school with wide-ranging and useful support. They have helped leaders and staff to improve many aspects of the school's work, for example, in teaching, the curriculum and leadership. However, the many threads of this support have not been pulled together tightly enough to determine priorities for further improvement in the school's planning.
- The school's action plans do not provide leaders with clearly defined yardsticks for judging whether the actions they take have been successful and for deciding what they need to do next to ensure rapid improvement.
- Leaders' skills for supporting and monitoring the progress of particular groups of pupils are not fully developed. Some progress targets are unrealistically high for some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in Key Stage 2. Not all staff are clear how to measure good progress for these pupils to enable them to work very successfully to improve their achievement. Spending of the pupil premium funds, for example, on additional support for eligible pupils, has not been focused or checked sharply to ensure maximum impact on their achievement.
- The headteacher is leading the school's improvement well. Improvement has been made in tightening up tracking most groups' progress and in increasing the frequency and accuracy of assessment procedures. The leadership team has been expanded and is increasing staff accountability for pupils' performance. Very capable teachers in charge of key subjects are now steadily developing their leadership expertise within their areas of responsibility.
- A reasonable range of subjects is provided. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well through the themes and topics pupils learn about and, especially, through their active involvement with the Comenius programme. Pupils' close ties with their German, Polish and Slovakian counterparts, involving joint participation in well-being projects,

enhance pupils' understanding of other cultures and healthy lifestyles.

- The school uses the national sports funding for primary schools suitably. It is being spent on sports coaching, staff training and the expansion of activities at lunchtime and after school. Pupils have been introduced to new sports, such as lacrosse, and the take-up of physical activities has increased. Skills ladders are used to measure gains in pupils' performance and show improvements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have varied levels of experience but, overall, have no more than an adequate overview of the school's work. They acknowledge that they are 'a work in progress'.
- They know that pupils' progress is improving and have some understanding of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' skills and where best practice in teaching is to be found in the school. They do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the impact of pupil premium funding. They are over-reliant on reports from the headteacher and other consultants when forming their views of pupils' performance. They are currently sensibly reviewing the role of link governors to acquire more detailed, first-hand information on the quality of pupils' learning.
- Their improving understanding of procedures for managing staff performance and pay is helping them to become better informed about what staff are doing to improve pupils' skills, for example in phonics. They have made suitable arrangements for reviewing the headteacher's performance.
- Governors have undertaken recent training to improve their skills and, as a consequence, have reorganised committees to sharpen the focus of their work.
- Governors make sure that the school's systems for safeguarding meet current national requirements.
- A review of governance is recommended to enable governors to be more effective in holding leaders to account for the school's performance.

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	124192
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	442557

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	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Cox
Headteacher	Christopher Ludlow
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2012
Telephone number	01902 893400
Fax number	01902 326147
Email address	office@blakeleyheath.staffs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

