

King Charles Primary School

Wilkes Avenue, Walsall, WS2 0UN

Inspection dates 20–21 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

- Although improving, pupils' progress has been too slow in recent years in Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing and mathematics. Attainment has been below average for too long.
- Too few of the most able pupils reach the higher levels of attainment.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement. There is not enough teaching that is consistently good or outstanding. As a result, pupils have not always achieved as well as they should.
- The actions taken by senior leaders are starting to secure improvements but have not yet had time to raise pupils' achievement enough or to improve all of the teaching. A considerable number of staff changes have slowed the pace of improvement until the start of the current school year.
- Pupils do not read widely enough, and have too little experience of different kinds of reading material.

The school has the following strengths

- The principal and new head of school, working with the governing body, form an effective team. They are driving improvement strongly and are starting to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching. Senior staff are developing the leadership capacity of new managers. As a result, teaching is improving.
- Behaviour is good. It has improved considerably as a result of a more effective behaviour policy which is clearly understood by pupils. Attendance has also improved significantly.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, are enthusiastic and have good attitudes to learning. The staff keep them safe and look after them well.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding are making much faster progress than before in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and this continues in Years 1 and 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons. Fifteen of these were seen jointly with the principal, the head of school or another senior leader.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, the principal, the head of school, other staff with particular responsibilities, and three governors. An inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- Inspectors discussed teaching and pupils' progress with class teachers. They also examined pupils' books and records of their progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading and discussed their reading with them.
- There were seven responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors talked informally to parents before school and during pupil/parent workshops, and also examined 102 responses from parents to the school's own survey of their views. The inspectors also considered 22 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's development plan and analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, safeguarding arrangements, school policies, and records of checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fiona Robinson	Additional Inspector
Deirdre Lyddy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- It is part of the Bentley Federation, consisting of two primary schools and a children's centre. The principal of the federation was appointed to the role in 2011, and the headteacher of the school was appointed in September 2013. One third of the staff have been appointed since the last inspection.
- Three quarters of the pupils are White British, the remainder coming from a range of other minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is double the national average. This is additional government funding provided for pupils who are in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals, or have a parent in the armed forces.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a Nursery class which children attend on a part-time basis, two Reception classes and nine other classes. The number of pupils on the school roll has increased rapidly in the last year.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a number of after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that it is all good or better, so that pupils' attainment and progress is good in all years, by:
 - improving pupils' progress in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2
 - ensuring that the most able pupils always receive sufficiently challenging work
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Enable all new managers in the school to develop their skills as quickly as possible, in order to drive further improvement in all their areas of responsibility.
- Provide, with the cooperation of parents, a greater range of suitable reading materials for pupils, so that they improve their reading skills and develop a an understanding of the wider world.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in their language and social development. Most children make expected progress and some make good progress which continues in Reception, although children are still a little below expected skills upon entry to Year 1. Children achieve well in Reception because of consistently good teaching and because they are supported by an effective staff team that has a good understanding of children's needs and abilities.
- Assessments and past test results show that pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 has been inconsistent. Pupils' progress was previously not as good in reading and writing as it was in mathematics, mainly because too few pupils, especially the more able, reached the higher levels. Previous assessments also show that pupils supported by the pupil premium made less progress in reading, writing and mathematics than other pupils.
- School records of progress, observations of teaching and work in pupils' books indicate that better progress is now being made in Key Stage 1 by all groups of pupils. This includes more able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and pupils supported by the pupil premium. Progress in the learning of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is good and standards are slightly above national expectations in Year 1. Teachers' assessments show that in 2013, pupils made good progress by the end of Year 2 in mathematics.
- This improving picture is also evident in Key Stage 2. Past test results show that pupils did not make enough progress in Years 3 to 6 for several years, and so their attainment has rarely approached the levels expected for their age by the time they leave. In 2013, for example, although a sizeable majority made the progress expected of them in writing, reading and mathematics, few made enough progress to catch up and reach national age-related levels. Currently, pupils' achievement is improving throughout Years 3 to 6. Writing is still relatively weak, but achievement in reading and mathematics has improved significantly.
- Recent improvements have taken place because teaching is improving rapidly. More challenging performance targets are being set and met more often both by teachers and pupils. As a result, an increasing number of pupils make good progress and reach above average standards.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium are now achieving at least as well as other pupils in Year 6 and there is no gap in attainment between the levels they reach and that of other pupils across the school. Better support has also improved the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well as pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils are enthusiastic readers and boys particularly have very strong views on what books they like most. They read regularly to adults at school, and their reading records are informative and well kept. However, the school has not yet provided a suitable range of reading materials, particularly for older pupils, in order to give them a wider view of the world they live in.
- Pupils are starting to achieve well in other subjects, such as information and communication technology, French and physical education, as they have more opportunities to learn new skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although an increasing amount of teaching is good or better, there is still too much that requires improvement. This means that progress is not good for all pupils.
- Teachers do not always provide work that is sufficiently challenging, especially for more able pupils in Key Stage 2. They do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Teachers have worked hard, and with increasing success, on raising pupils' progress in mathematics and in writing. An example of good teaching of writing was seen in Year 6, when pupils were encouraged to write a journalistic account imagining themselves marooned on a desert island. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of how to write interesting opening

sentences, and used punctuation and alliteration effectively.

- Teachers have improved their understanding and use of the checks made on pupils' progress. Where learning is most effective, teachers are using this information to plan work that is suitably challenging for all groups of pupils.
- Leaders have introduced an improved marking scheme which is helping pupils understand more clearly how they are doing, and the steps they must take to improve.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress because they know what they are learning about and why. This was seen in a highly enjoyable lesson encouraging their imagination when they talked and wrote about what aliens would wear.
- Teachers work effectively with their teaching assistants, who know and support pupils well, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school.
- Pupils say that their behaviour has improved partly 'because we have really good teachers who don't give up on us'. They like the school environment and appreciate the rewards they can win for good behaviour and attendance.
- Pupils look smart and are proud of their school uniform. They have good opportunities to take on responsibility, for example by helping classmates and greeting visitors.
- The presentation of pupils' work is generally good. This is because they have received good guidance from their teachers, and know what is expected of them.
- Pupils enjoy many exciting activities and describe, in great detail, their school trips and the work they do to raise money for different charities. These all contribute to the effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning, and work together happily in small and large groups in their classes. Very occasionally pupils lose focus on their learning if, for example, they finish their work quickly and are unsure of what to do next. Some younger pupils report with great seriousness that 'there are one or two naughty boys in our class'.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are quick to understand how they are expected to behave and how to mix with other children. Staff work closely with parents to help children get familiar with their school routines. This was observed working well in an activity when many parents worked in classrooms and outside with their children.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils trust the adults in the school, and say they deal quickly with any rare unsafe behaviour by pupils. Pupils behave safely when moving around the long corridors in school, and at lunchtime in the hall.
- The school works effectively with external professionals in supporting pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- There is hardly any evidence of bullying, with many pupils having benefited from the school's lessons on the subject. They understand the dangers of cyber-bullying, especially through mobile phones and the social media on the internet.
- Attendance has improved considerably in the last two years and this year is good. This is because the school does not approve any unauthorised absence, and has helped some parents to have a better understanding of the importance of regular attendance. Punctuality has also improved.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety in the well-organised breakfast and after-school clubs are also good.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not yet good because pupils' achievement requires improvement and leaders have not yet succeeded in ensuring that teaching is consistently good.

- Actions taken by senior leaders are beginning to have a positive impact on school improvement. In addition, newly appointed middle leaders are playing a greater part in guiding and supporting teachers, although this remains a developing area.
- Since the last inspection, significant changes to the leadership and management of the school have led to the establishment of a more effective staffing structure. The principal and new head of school have led the school with considerable energy and determination in dealing with a long list of priorities for improvement. This team is now driving improvement in many areas, especially the achievement of pupils, the quality of teaching and the development of other managers in the school.
- Leaders are developing the use of the pupil premium effectively, resulting in present eligible pupils making progress similar to, and in some cases better than, that of other pupils.
- Improvements driven by senior managers include better checks on pupils' progress and a greater understanding by staff of the use of this information to guide the planning of pupils' future learning.
- Teachers, including some new to the school, are closely supported and their effectiveness is checked regularly by leaders. Teachers are given good training opportunities through, for example, the Outstanding Teacher Programme. School leaders make sure that any pay increases are closely related to teachers' performance.
- Other improvements include a significant rise in pupils' attendance and an improvement in their behaviour. The school has also provided pupils with better computer-based resources, a new library, and a greater number of stimulating learning activities. Leaders' good use of the extra sport premium funding has given pupils more opportunities to develop their physical education and sports skills.
- School leaders promote equal opportunities and cooperation effectively. This results in there being no discrimination. It also contributes positively to the improved behaviour of pupils and the good promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils from different backgrounds relate well to one another.
- The local authority works effectively with the school. Its guidance has helped senior leaders to rigorously and accurately assess the school's performance.
- The school's partnership with parents has improved and a good number take opportunities to visit the school when possible. Parents, during informal conversations and in the school's own recent survey, are almost unanimous in their approval of their children's academic and social development. One, typically, commented, 'It's getting better and better.'
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors ensure that through regular visits to the school, observations of lessons and pupils' work, and relevant training, they are in a much stronger position than previously to challenge school leaders on the school's performance. They have a good understanding of the schools' strengths and issues for improvement, including how pupils' achievement compares with that found in other schools. They no longer rely on leaders to supply them with information but find things out for themselves. Governors know how to set challenging performance targets for the principal and head of school. They also know what leaders have done to tackle weaker teaching and they understand the links between rises in teachers' pay and their performance. Governors carefully monitor the use of the pupil premium fund and have a clear awareness of the performance of eligible pupils. They also know how the new sports funding is used and how this is helping to develop the skills and health of pupils. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and regularly review the effectiveness of school policies.

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	104175
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	442546

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Lee
Principal/Head of School	Rod Dickson/Kate Magner
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 September 2012
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