

Bradfield C.E. Primary School

Cock Lane, Southend, Reading, RG7 6HR

Inspection dates

3–4 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' achievement has not been enough to make up for underperformance in the past.
- Pupils with special educational needs, the most able and boys do not always make as much progress as other pupils.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to help all pupils make good progress over time. Some improvements to teaching are relatively recent.
- Support from teaching assistants is too variable and does not consistently help pupils to learn well.
- Until very recently, too many pupils have not arrived promptly at the start of the school day.
- Some leaders are new to their roles and are not yet fully involved in improving teaching and learning.
- Leaders know what needs to happen to improve the school further but have not set out clear plans to show how they will achieve this.

The school has the following strengths

- Many pupils have made rapid progress this year. Standards at the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 are above average.
- Inadequate teaching has been eradicated.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Parents are confident that their children are safe and happy at school, and that the quality of education is improving.
- The executive headteacher and, more recently, the interim headteacher and other leaders have successfully tackled many of the school's weaknesses over the last year.
- Governance is strong. The interim executive board provides effective challenge to school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including information on pupils’ progress and the use of pupil premium funding, records of the monitoring of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors visited 12 lessons, including five that were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed break, lunch time, and the start of the school day, and attended two assemblies.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and talked with them about their work and the school. They also heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with teachers, senior and middle leaders, members of the interim executive board and a representative from the local authority.
- The team took account of 47 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke briefly with a small number of parents and carers as they brought their children to school.
- Evidence from the monitoring inspections between March 2013 and March 2014 was also taken into account.

Inspection team

Alison Bradley, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school received its last full inspection in December 2012 when it was judged to require special measures. Improvements were required to pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, and to leadership and management at all levels, including governance.
- Bradfield is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are White British and nearly all speak English as their first language.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are similar to the national averages.
- Around one in 10 pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after). This is below the national average.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the last full inspection, there has been significant turnover in staff, including senior leaders. Nearly half of the classes are taught by teachers new to the school this year. The acting assistant headteacher was appointed internally in November 2013. The interim headteacher joined the school in April 2014. A new headteacher has been appointed for September 2014.
- The school has been supported by a national leader of education for the equivalent of two days each week since September 2013. She, and other members of her staff from Churchend School, will continue to provide support in the next school year.
- An interim executive board replaced the governing body in May 2013. It has recently appointed new members who are either experienced governors or represent parents.

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 by:
 - ensuring teachers' expectations of all pupils are consistently high and that there is appropriate support and challenge for pupils with different needs
 - making sure teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons and adapt their teaching accordingly
 - ensuring marking and feedback are always helpful and that pupils can respond and improve their work
 - improving the skills of teaching assistants to support learning
 - making sure that teachers can learn from best practice in Bradfield and other schools.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing senior and middle leaders so that they are better able to help the school improve further
 - ensuring that there is a clear long-term plan for the school
 - strengthening partnerships with parents so that pupils arrive on time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last full inspection. Each class has made at least the progress they should, and often better, in English and mathematics this school year.
- Achievement requires improvement because progress has not been fast enough to make up for previous underperformance, particularly in writing. Some groups of pupils do not consistently make good progress, in particular the most able, those with special educational needs and boys.
- Most children join the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding that are above those typical for their age. Better teaching over time and more precise monitoring of pupils' progress mean that the proportions reaching average or higher standards by the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6 are now above national figures.
- Standards in reading are high across the school. The carefully structured teaching of reading from the Reception class onwards means pupils get off to a good start and many can read accurately and answer questions about their books by the end of Year 1. Pupils make good progress over time and by age 11 they are about 10 months ahead of pupils of the same age.
- Changes to the way writing is taught have had a big impact on standards this school year. In most classes, pupils have made big steps forward to reach levels above those expected for their age. Standards are closer to average where teaching has not been consistently good all year.
- Standards in mathematics are above average across the school. This is the result of effective training, guidance and support to improve the teaching of mathematics this year.
- Until recently, the specific needs of the most able pupils and those with special educational needs have not been clearly identified or their progress carefully checked. As a result, they do not always get the right guidance and support to help them make good progress.
- In some classes, boys do not achieve as well as girls, particularly in reading and writing. This is because teachers do not always make sure that boys are fully involved throughout lessons.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding generally reach standards above those expected for their age. However, they do not achieve as well as other pupils in the school because until recently, too little attention has been paid to helping them to catch up. Currently, by the end of Year 6, eligible pupils are behind their classmates by about 10 months in reading, four months in writing and six months in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to enable all groups of pupils to catch up and make good progress over time. The improvements in some classes are relatively recent.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is often provided in small groups outside of the classroom. The school has only recently analysed which activities make the most difference. Teachers are not always skilled at adapting lessons for these pupils so sometimes the work is too hard or the pupils rely too much on adult support.
- The school has only recently turned its attention to making sure the most able pupils learn well. However, teachers' expectations of these pupils are sometimes too low and at times the work set is too easy.
- Some teachers do not check pupils' understanding thoroughly enough or use effective strategies to engage the few pupils, usually boys, who find it difficult to join in or concentrate without adult support.
- Inadequate teaching is a thing of the past and teaching is often good. Inspectors saw pupils learning well where teachers knew from previous lessons or skilful questioning what pupils already understood and adapted their teaching accordingly. They tackled things in a different way to help pupils overcome difficulties and taught new knowledge and skills when pupils were ready. Teachers challenged pupils to use what they already knew to work things out for themselves.

- Pupils' writing is improving because teaching is carefully planned. 'Talk homework' is used well to encourage pupils to gather their ideas. They are taught how to plan their work and write for different purposes. Pupils write longer pieces more frequently and they are expected to present their work neatly.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give feedback to show pupils how they can improve. The comments are more helpful in some classes than others, and more effective in writing than mathematics. However, pupils do not always have opportunities to follow them up.
- The quality and support of teaching assistants is too variable. They make a valuable contribution to lessons when they understand what pupils are learning and how to support them. They are less effective when their questioning is not focused or they complete administrative tasks during lessons.
- Physical education lessons are taught well by specialist staff. They have high expectations of pupils, demonstrate the skills they are teaching and give pupils plenty of opportunities to practise.

The behaviour and safety of pupils require improvement

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Not all parents ensure that their children arrive at school on time every morning. Over a third of pupils have been late at least once since September. Very recently, as a result of the school's close work with local authority education welfare officers, the number of pupils regularly arriving late for school has fallen sharply.
- Attendance rates are back above average because the school has made it clear what is an acceptable reason for absence and what is not. Good attendance is rewarded.
- Pupils generally feel safe at school and are taught how to keep themselves safe in different situations, for example when using the internet. They know that name-calling is wrong.
- Most parents and carers who expressed a view felt that their children were safe and happy at the school. However, not all pupils are confident that when they occasionally fall out or hurt each other, all staff will follow it up effectively.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are kind and caring to each other and respect staff. Pupils know how they should behave around school and at break times and rise to these expectations with little need for reminders about rules.
- As teaching has improved, so have pupils' enthusiasm for school and their interest in what they are learning. In the main, they listen well, settle quickly to tasks and concentrate on their work, with or without adult support.

The leadership and management require improvement

- The executive headteacher has ensured there has been a relentless focus on improving teaching and pupils' achievement this year. Training and clear guidance, alongside individual support and regular monitoring, have improved teaching. Teachers have met with staff from the executive headteacher's school to discuss their work and observe them teaching.
- Teachers have higher expectations of the pupils in their class because senior leaders have made it clear what standards pupils should reach. They have regular meetings with staff to check if any pupils are falling behind.
- The executive headteacher has worked effectively with the interim headteacher since his arrival and in a short space of time has been able to step back from the day-to-day management of the school.
- The interim headteacher has developed positive relationships with parents and worked closely with other leaders in the school to ensure it is well placed to improve to 'good'. Leaders have not, however, set out explicitly what needs to be done to achieve this goal and how they will check progress along the way.

- Other senior and middle leaders are becoming established in their roles. They are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and know what the priorities are and what is expected of them. Increasingly, they are showing that they can lead improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- More recently, other staff have agreed to take on additional responsibilities. It is early days, however, so while these new leaders know what is to be done, they have not yet had the opportunity to make a difference.
- Leaders acknowledge that topic plans have not been updated to better develop pupils' knowledge and skills in a range of subjects over time. A new approach is being planned for September 2014, to improve the way subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics are taught.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Better teaching has helped pupils learn how to cooperate and work together. They learn to appreciate art and music and develop an understanding of right and wrong through discussion and considering other people's views. Year 5 pupils have taken part in the 'The Art of Being Brilliant' project which has helped them understand the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions.
- Pupils are benefiting from the new sports funding. The money has been used for specialist coaching and to maintain the school's tradition of participation in competitive sports, as well as to expand the range of clubs on offer. The school has a good success rate in local competitions and most pupils take part in at least one sports club. Some staff have attended training but there are no specific plans to develop staff's skills.
- The school's systems for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has provided well-targeted support this year by arranging for the executive headteacher to help the school and checking carefully the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils. A recent detailed review with senior leaders identified what needs to happen next. The local authority has appropriate plans to support and challenge the school to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved significantly since the inspection of 2012. Members of the interim executive board have brought the skills and expertise needed to improve the quality of education. They have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they ask for the right information, understand the school's performance data well and ask searching questions about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Members know what is being done to challenge underperformance; they set targets for improvement and are clear that teachers' pay will be linked to the achievement of their pupils. They monitor spending carefully and check how additional government funding is helping to raise achievement. Members have met regularly with parents to keep them informed about the school's progress and plans. The response to the online questionnaire shows that parents have greater confidence in the school than in the past. Membership of the interim executive board has recently increased to make sure that there is the capacity for further improvement and in preparation for the transition back to a governing body.

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	110007
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	441540

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Hunter
Headteacher	Paul German (Interim)
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 December 2012
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