

Bedmond Village Primary and Nursery School

Meadow Way, Bedmond, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, WD5 0RD

Inspection dates 15–16 July 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

- Pupils' progress is not accelerating sufficiently quickly, particularly in Years 2 and 3.
- Progress in mathematics is not as rapid as in writing.
- Some pupils have poorly-formed handwriting.
- Not enough priority is given to improving pupils' speaking skills.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what their pupils can achieve or challenge the most-able pupils sufficiently.
- Teaching assistants are not consistently effective in supporting pupils' learning.
- Frequent staff changes have hindered the efforts of senior leaders to improve the effectiveness of teaching and raise achievement.
- Middle leadership is not yet fully effective.
- Despite the school's efforts, not all parents are supportive of its work.
- The breadth and balance of the curriculum are not always appropriate in every class in the school.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards in writing are improving.
- There has been significant improvement in provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school uses the outdoor environment and the Forest School very effectively.
- The marking of pupils' work is good and is consistently in line with the school's policy.
- This is a welcoming school. Pupils from all backgrounds, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well.
- Behaviour is good. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils feel safe and secure.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough.
- Governors' skills and knowledge have improved significantly since the last inspection and they are now better placed to hold school leaders to account.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in seven lessons, all of which were seen in company with the school's senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the school's senior leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). A further 14 responses were received in paper form. The inspector also looked at the school's own survey of parents' views, conducted in 2013.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including local authority reviews and action plans and records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. He also considered minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. He also looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bedmond Village Primary and Nursery School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is a significant minority of pupils from Traveller families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above average. Many of these pupils join the school from other schools locally, often with complex learning needs.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals or those looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- There are six classes. One provides for children in the Nursery and Reception. There are single year classes from Year 1 to Year 4. Year 5 and 6 pupils are taught together in one class.
- The school has recently introduced a breakfast club which provides for pupils who arrive at school early.
- The school benefits from the support of a Local Leader of Education, who is the headteacher of Aycliffe Drive Primary School in Hemel Hempstead.
- There were too few pupils leaving Year 6 in 2013 to make a reliable judgement about how far the school met the government's floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has experienced considerable difficulties in the recruitment and retention of high quality teaching staff. There has been a rapid turnover of teachers in the last two years and this has significantly affected the continuity of pupils' learning. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal times, and who sometimes stay for only short periods, is also considerably higher than is normally found.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers across the school have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set work that is consistently challenging, particularly for the most-able pupils
 - the work of teaching assistants is improved so that they have more impact on pupils' learning
 - all teachers systematically encourage pupils to develop their speaking skills and articulate their ideas clearly.
- Accelerate pupils' progress across the school, particularly in Years 2 and 3, by:
 - ensuring that pupils develop greater depth of understanding and make more rapid progress in mathematics across the school
 - implementing a systematic programme for improving handwriting across the school.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - strengthening middle-leadership roles to ensure that subject leadership across the curriculum is robust and effective
 - developing further strategies to encourage all parents to engage positively with the aims and ethos of the school
 - ensuring that the new curriculum provides pupils with an appropriate breadth and depth of

coverage in all the required subjects and in all classes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In recent years, pupils' progress across the school has not been sufficiently rapid or consistent to ensure standards are high enough. Cohort sizes have typically been small, particularly in the last two years, and the result of any one individual pupil distorts the picture of the school's performance relative to national averages. Nonetheless, while Year 6 pupils whose attendance is good make at least the progress expected, too few pupils across the school make the rapid progress they need for their overall achievement to be good.
- Although showing some improvement in the current year, particularly in reading and writing, standards by the end of Year 6 have typically been below average. Writing, however, has been a major recent focus, with improvements increasingly evident in pupils' work across the school. Improvements in mathematics have been slower to emerge.
- Currently most pupils are making at least the progress expected. Some year groups, however, notably Years 2 and 3, have high proportions of disabled pupils and those who have complex special educational needs whose difficulties are compounded by high mobility, low attendance or other disadvantages. In these year groups, progress, while just adequate, is not sufficiently rapid to drive accelerated improvements. Consequently, attainment in Year 2 remains below average.
- Insufficient attention has been given, until recently, to ensuring that pupils' handwriting is of a high enough standard. There are still too many pupils who do not have legible, joined writing.
- Too few pupils express themselves confidently and clearly. Although they invariably listen attentively, pupils' speaking skills are underdeveloped.
- There were too few pupils supported by pupil premium funding in Year 6 in 2013 to make a reliable judgement of their attainment as a group. In the past, the achievement of these pupils across the school has sometimes lagged behind that of the others. However, with increasingly effective support, their progress is now accelerating and the gaps between their attainment and other pupils are beginning to close in all subjects.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in the screening check in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) was slightly below the national average in 2013. The school provides appropriate levels of support for the development of pupils' reading skills.
- Children enter Nursery with skills and understanding that are generally well below those normally found. Typically, children's skills and knowledge have also been well below average on entry to Year 1. However, provision and outcomes have improved considerably for both groups. Current Reception children have made good progress this year so that standards in all areas, other than communication and language, are now at least average.
- In the past, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have typically made expected progress from their starting points. Following the introduction of more effective support in the last year, their progress is improving.
- Younger pupils from Traveller backgrounds generally make less good progress than the others. As they move through the school, progress improves. Traveller pupils who attend frequently make increasingly rapid progress, with some attaining levels that are similar to the majority of other pupils.

- The primary sports funding has been used effectively to improve both pupils' skills and their general health and well-being. The funding has also improved the quality of teaching through the development of staff coaching skills. New activities, such as gymnastics and competitive team sport, have boosted pupils' participation in sport at all levels across the school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Weaknesses in teaching and frequent staff changes have, over time, adversely affected learning and progress. Current school leaders have resolutely tackled weak teaching. However, there is still insufficient teaching that is consistently good to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of their pupils. For example, while pupils' written work has improved over the year, some pupils' work is adversely affected by poor handwriting. Not enough attention is given to helping pupils to develop their speaking skills.
- Teachers do not always ensure that the work they set provides the appropriate level of challenge, particularly for the most-able pupils.
- The impact of teaching assistants on pupils' learning is variable. Some good practice was observed. However, in some lessons assistants do not move pupils' learning on quickly enough or ensure pupils begin work quickly.
- The checking of pupils' progress to establish what they need to learn next has become more secure during the current year. Targets and check sheets are used increasingly well to check pupils' progress and ensure they do not fall behind. Pupils know their current targets. Teachers' consistently good practice in marking ensures that pupils understand the next steps they need to take to move their learning on.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been improved and this has had a positive impact upon children's learning. Activities now provide more challenge and learning opportunities in the outdoor area are well-developed.
- The progress of the small number of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is tracked carefully. This ensures that support is accurately targeted to support individual pupils who need help and that gaps between their attainment and other pupils are closing.
- In some lessons, learning is very effective. In a successful literacy session in Year 6, pupils evaluated the actions of the captain of the Titanic from different perspectives before beginning an extended piece of writing. Pupils' learning developed quickly as a result, with pupils relentlessly focused on the objectives of the activity. They were encouraged to share ideas and draw upon those of other pupils. Pupils were ambitious to succeed and to contribute their ideas.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are mostly good, despite frequent changes in staffing. When teaching challenges them, pupils show commitment. Even in the less inspiring lessons, they sustain their efforts well.
- Around the school, poor behaviour is rare. There have been very few exclusions. Teachers'

effective behaviour management systems ensure a consistent response to any issues that might occasionally arise. The school has a positive ethos. Playtimes are calm and orderly. There is no evidence to substantiate the parental concerns about pupils' behaviour expressed in the online survey. Pupils themselves said that behaviour was almost always good.

- Pupils enthusiastically undertake responsibilities as buddies and play leaders. This allows them to contribute to the efficient running of the school community. They are very respectful towards the school's animals and the environment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe, certain that adults will respond promptly to their concerns should this be necessary. The school shows considerable commitment to pupils who are experiencing challenges. It works particularly hard, for example, to support pupils from a Traveller background.
- The recently-established breakfast club successfully meets the needs of pupils, some of whom live at a distance or arrive at school early.
- Pupils have a good awareness of risk. They recognise that bullying may take various forms. Older pupils understand the dangers of cyber-bullying. Pupils feel that the school supports them well in recognising possible risks.
- The attendance of most pupils has improved and is now broadly average. The school has rigorous systems for monitoring and improving attendance.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because inconsistencies in teaching have not yet been wholly eliminated. Frequent staff changes have prevented senior leaders improving teaching and achievement as quickly as planned.
- The headteacher knows what the school needs to improve and is committed to bringing about the necessary changes. She has sharply improved the quality of teachers' marking and teaching and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, other middle leaders are not yet making a consistent contribution to the school's improvement. While the key co-ordinators of literacy and numeracy are well-established, frequent staff changes have adversely affected the long-term leadership of other subjects.
- The breadth and balance of the current curriculum are not always appropriate in every class. The curriculum is focused on securing improvements in literacy and numeracy skills. Recent initiatives to promote improvements in writing are supporting better progress. Excellent use is made of the school grounds through Forest School. Elsewhere, the breadth and quality of the curriculum are less consistent. While the school is well-prepared for the new curriculum, evidence of pupils' learning in science, geography, history and religious education is limited in some year groups.
- The school has good relationships with most parents and reaches out successfully to the whole local community. However, school leaders recognise that, despite the availability of the Parents' Forum, not all parents are yet fully supportive of the school's aims.
- Senior leaders are very committed to addressing remaining weaknesses. They know what needs to be done. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is very thorough. Senior leaders now hold staff fully accountable for pupils' progress.

- Senior leaders track the progress of groups and individuals closely, including those receiving additional funding, and identify gaps in their knowledge and understanding. They adjust the additional teaching to ensure that it is increasingly effective in closing gaps in pupils' learning.
- The school engages readily with other schools. It benefits from the effective guidance of the local leader of education now linked to the school so that staff increase their effectiveness.
- Systems for setting teachers' targets so that they improve their practice are well-established. This ensures a close link between teachers' performance and pay progression, so that only effective teachers qualify for higher pay levels.
- The local authority provides good support for the school. This has helped to accelerate improvement.
- The promotion of pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is good. Community links and partnerships are actively developed. The school allows pupils to explore other cultural traditions and faiths, including, for example, participation in projects to explore the Traveller lifestyle.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are building their confidence as school leaders. They play an increasingly active role in setting a direction for the school and have provided better challenge for school leaders in the last year. They have undertaken training to enable them to contribute more fully to self-evaluation and development planning, but recognise that they are still learning. They are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships.
 - Governors have a sound understanding of school data and can now relate their knowledge to national trends. They have a broad understanding of the current quality of teaching and know what needs to improve and what is being done to bring this about.
 - Governors understand the impact of the pupil premium funding in closing gaps in pupils' attainment.
 - Governors ensure that all statutory duties are met, including the procedures relating to safeguarding pupils.

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	117248
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	442035

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	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Richardson
Headteacher	Emma Woollon
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2012
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