

# Whaley Bridge Primary School

Buxton Road, Whaley Bridge, High Peak, SK23 7HX

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Sometimes, teachers do not question pupils well enough to gain a clear understanding of what they can and cannot do. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Writing is not taught consistently well and, therefore, pupils do not make as much progress as in other subjects.
- Pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, the pupil premium, are not making progress quickly enough compared with other pupils at the school.
- The unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons of a small number of pupils is not always dealt with quickly enough.
- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body do not have systems in place that give them a clear picture of the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils. As a result, teaching is not always planned well to make sure that all pupils make consistently rapid progress.
- Senior leaders have not gained the full confidence of all parents and carers in the way in which the school is led and managed.

### The school has the following strengths

- The pupils enjoy being at school and are kept safe.
- The good teaching of reading is improving pupils' attainment.
- The pupils benefit greatly in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development from the highly inclusive nature of the school.
- Pupils with the most complex combination of learning and medical needs are cared for exceptionally and make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 13 lessons. The headteacher joined them in six observations of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, minutes from governors' meetings, and records and policies about teaching, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and evidence which the school presented about the impact of particular programmes intended to improve reading and communication skills.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at playtimes and spoke to groups of pupils about what they enjoyed most about their school.
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read and visited groups where pupils were learning about letters and sounds.
- Inspectors sought the views of parents and carers by looking at a summary of responses to the school's own questionnaire, talking to parents in the playground and considering the 73 responses to the online survey, Parent View.

## Inspection team

Clare Cossor, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Elizabeth Needham

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is well below the national average. Many of these pupils have significant disabilities and/or special educational needs.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well-above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school has specially resourced provision for 10 pupils with special educational complex learning needs and/or disabilities. The needs include moderate and severe learning difficulties, autism, emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and significant medical needs.
- Individuals with particular needs attend Buxton Pupil Referral Unit every afternoon.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post for two years.
- The senior leadership team has been restructured very recently to include the appointment of new leaders for mathematics and English.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently good or better, and also raise the achievement of pupils in writing, by ensuring that all teachers:
  - have consistently high expectations of pupils, including of their behaviour in lessons
  - use questions effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding of what they have been taught and what they need to do better
  - demonstrate the highest possible standards of handwriting and presentation when marking pupils' work and writing in their records and target sheets
  - understand and implement fully the school's policy for the teaching and assessment of writing.
- Improve the achievement of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding by ensuring that:
  - senior leaders, the governing body and teachers have a clear view of the pupils' targets for improvement in their learning and the progress they are making
  - learning resources are always of a sufficiently high standard to meet the needs of pupils and are well matched to what they are being asked to do.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - senior leaders have systems which are well organised and rigorous enough to enable them to gather and analyse sufficient information about the achievement of pupils and the performance of the school quickly and accurately so weaknesses can be identified and tackled
  - systems introduced recently to help governors have a deeper understanding of the achievement of particular groups of pupils are fully applied

- senior leaders communicate more effectively with parents, so that families have a clearer understanding of how leaders and teachers are meeting the learning needs of pupils and improving the school.
- 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

- Pupils' achievement has been broadly average since the previous inspection. Improvements in teaching have not been enough to raise attainment rapidly. Few of the improvements have been sustained, so that attainment has gone up and down since the previous inspection.
- The achievement of pupils in writing is still weaker than in other subjects and in all year groups.
- The achievement of pupils in writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 fell in 2013 and remained the same for reading. Progress in reading is now improving and is just beginning to do so in mathematics.
- Typically, children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage below the attainment expected for their age. They make good progress from these starting points, particularly so in their communication and language development.
- The differences in achievement for pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils at the school remain wider than those found nationally. In 2013, eligible pupils in Year 6 were over two years behind other pupils overall. In mathematics, they were three years behind and two and a half years behind in reading and writing. School data suggest that these gaps are closing, but there is a mixed pattern of improvement. Resources for eligible pupils are not always used well to advance their learning.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Progress is continuing to increase as a result of well-targeted programmes and well-directed teaching, which are monitored closely to check how well pupils are doing.
- Standards in reading are starting to rise in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This is a result of support for groups of pupils that is sharply focused and matched well to particular needs. Teachers and teaching assistants are using carefully selected programmes and schemes skilfully, to give additional help to those pupils who need it.
- School data show that, during this year, the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics screening check (about the sounds that letters make) has increased.
- The more-able pupils in school make expected and, in some cases, good progress. However, the work given to them is too easy and they are not challenged enough.
- The achievement of pupils with the most complex combination of learning and medical needs in the enhanced resourced unit is good and, in some cases, outstandingly so. Strong partnership working with families, specialist teaching services and health agencies ensure that ambitious targets are set and achieved.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- There is not a consistent enough approach to the teaching of writing across the school, or in the expectations that teachers have of what the pupils can achieve. This approach is apparent where low expectations of writing are replicated by teachers because their own handwriting in pupils' work books, records, target sheets and classrooms is not neat enough or clear enough.

- Teachers, occasionally, use inappropriate resources in lessons. When this happens, it limits how much pupils are able to learn and the progress they can make. For example, in a letters-and-sounds activity, a toy which was used by the class teacher to demonstrate a particular 'sound', was too small for the children to see and, therefore, they lost interest quickly and stopped listening to what the teacher was saying.
- There are times when pupils lose concentration because they are not being challenged sufficiently, or have not understood what they have been taught. That is because, in some classes, teachers do not use questions in a way that ensures that pupils clarify their ideas and think hard about what they are learning. In other classes, challenging questioning does happen.
- Reading is taught well across the school and pupils enjoy their reading. The schools' investment in training for teaching assistants is beginning to pay off and the quality of the teaching of reading is rising.
- Teaching assistants and higher-level teaching assistants are used very effectively to work with pupils using a helpful programme. Pupils enjoy these activities, feel a strong sense of achievement and, in most cases, are making good progress.
- Teachers use targets for improvement effectively to identify what pupils need to do next. These targets are presented to pupils in ways which the pupils are able to understand and, as a result, they are able to make progress. This is particularly so in the teaching of mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6 and is contributing to the recent rise in achievement.
- When teaching is good, lively and imaginative approaches are used often. For example, investigations into gases, liquids and solids in a Year 3 class captured the interest and excitement of pupils. Gasps of anticipation could be heard across the room during the experiment as vinegar was added to the bicarbonate of soda and a balloon became inflated.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall. As a result, children have fun in their learning and are eager and confident to tackle new tasks. The teaching is also helping to prepare them for moving into Key Stage 1.
- Teaching in the enhanced resourced unit is good. This is because teachers and teaching assistants know and understand the complex needs of the pupils exceptionally well. They use an impressive range of communication systems, including sign language and pictorial symbols, to make sure that pupils can let adults know what they need and achieve better understanding.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes is not always as focused and quiet as it needs to be to help them make the best possible progress. Pupils talk about times when noise and 'shouting out' during lessons makes it difficult for them to do their work. This is because not all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of the pupils' behaviour, or stop minor types of inappropriate behaviour quickly enough.
- The poor behaviour of a small number of pupils is repeating over time. The senior leaders make sure that instances of bad behaviour and bullying are logged and recorded, but it is not clear that they are analysed effectively to show repeating patterns or triggers for these behaviours. Pupils and parents give a mixed view on how quickly instances of bad behaviour are dealt with

by teachers and leaders.

- The behaviour of pupils as they move in and around school is calm and orderly. They are polite and caring towards one another. They can talk about one another's achievements. The school's highly inclusive nature means that pupils recognise and celebrate one another's strengths and differences, including those of pupils attending the enhanced resourced unit.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All safeguarding requirements are met.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and happy at school. They are eager to talk to visitors about the many things that they love about Whaley Bridge Primary School and about how the teachers 'care about us and help us to do our best'. Parents recognise that care for their children is a strength of the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They talk with enthusiasm about visits from the police and topics which they explore in their classes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are confident about how to stay safe on line. They have very clear views also about the importance of limiting how much junk food they eat and the consequences of not doing so.
- The complex and challenging behavioural and medical needs of pupils in the enhanced resourced unit are met exceptionally well. This is because of the high level of staff commitment, skill and expertise. As a result, pupils thrive.
- Attendance is broadly average with that of pupils in other schools. It is improving. This reflects progress which the school has made in making sure that parents understand the importance of pupils having 100% attendance.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Senior and subject leaders have not secured the confidence of all parents and carers. There is a view from a significant minority of parents that when concerns are raised, they are not dealt with quickly enough. The systems used by the school to communicate with parents are not effective enough in helping parents to understand what senior leaders are doing to meet the learning needs of pupils and improve the school.
- The headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the main areas that need to be better and has high expectations of herself and high aspirations for pupils. She is committed to driving forward improvement in the school.
- Systems for analysing how well the school is improving are not detailed enough and are not fully applied. Current systems do not enable the headteacher or her senior colleagues to analyse in detail how well the school is improving in specific areas. This weakness is slowing progress in raising pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics and in the raising of standards overall across the school.
- Senior leaders fulfil their key responsibilities in relation to the performance management of teachers and are not afraid to challenge underperformance. Despite this, there are occasions when their expectations are not high enough and do not have sufficient impact to improve teaching as quickly as is needed.

- The enhanced resourced unit for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is led and managed well. Although the unit is in a separate building, the headteacher makes it a priority to have daily contact with all staff and pupils in this part of the school. As a result, she understands the personal and learning needs of these pupils extremely well and the staff feel valued and supported. These pupils are included fully in the main school as much as possible.
- Leaders work well with professionals from health and specialist-education services to meet the challenging needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school is held as an example of best practice in this field locally by teachers in other schools, and highly valued by professionals and families because of the work which it does.
- The school uses the primary sports funding well. Teachers have accessed high-quality training in sports and dance. As a result, the range of activities available to all pupils in school has increased. Staff have seen a rise in the confidence of more timid pupils and a love of competition developing in others as a result of inter-school matches and tournaments.
- The local authority has kept the performance of the school under review and has supported the school in drawing up plans to tackle the recent dip in achievement in writing and mathematics in 2013. The training it has given to senior leaders and subject coordinators in the school is helping to improve teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is beginning to have a more-accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. This is because the new ways in which the headteacher is sharing information with it make matters much clearer. It is now challenging senior leaders more effectively than previously by asking searching questions, including some relating to analysis of data on the school's performance, and making frequent visits to school. This is resulting in more focused work to improve the quality of teaching
  - It has a good understanding of the key priorities which the school needs to address and is committed both to supporting and to challenging the headteacher and senior leaders, in order that improvements are brought about quickly
  - It fulfils responsibilities in relation to the performance management of staff. It has not shied away from challenging poor performance, but it is not secure in evaluating the impact of additional funding for eligible 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112647
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	444007

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Winter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fay Walton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01663 732354
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