

# Bowhill Primary School

Buddle Lane, St Thomas, Exeter, Devon, EX4 1JT

**Inspection dates** 1–2 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement. Leaders have not improved teaching quickly enough to ensure all pupils make good progress, especially in mathematics. There are gaps in what pupils know and understand in this subject in Years 1 to 4.
- Leaders do not track pupils' progress effectively. They are generally slow to spot some pupils who are falling behind.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is too variable across the school. Work set does not always provide enough challenge to ensure they make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Governors depend on reports from the headteacher to check on the school's improvements. They are not checking for themselves and holding leaders to account for improvements to the quality of teaching.
- Middle leaders lack experience in driving improvements in their subjects. They are not checking in sufficient detail if their actions are making a difference to the progress pupils make.
- Some teachers and teaching assistants do not expect enough of their pupils. Work set is then too easy which slows progress. At these times, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are less positive. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Marking does not consistently help pupils improve their work. Teachers do not routinely check that pupils act upon the guidance they are given.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The good teaching is helping children learn and develop successfully.
- Reading is taught well and pupils make good progress as a result. Typically, nearly half reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school provides a safe environment. The school encourages pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- As a result of good support, the progress made by pupils eligible for free school meals is improving quickly in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, of which five were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made short visits to five lessons. Inspectors observed two assemblies and talked with parents and carers at the start and end of the school day.
- The inspectors talked with a group of pupils, as well as individual pupils during lessons and at playtimes, to find out their views about the school. The team completed a scrutiny of pupils' English and mathematics books to establish the quality of pupils' work. The inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, records of lesson observations, information on pupils' progress, and work in pupils' books. They scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 40 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They checked information on the school's website, and took into consideration 34 questionnaires completed by staff and two letters from parents.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, leaders, staff and governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. A further discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.

## Inspection team

Catherine Leahy, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Bywater	Additional Inspector
Dianne Jones	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bowhill Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is just above the national average.
- In September, the school reorganised its class structure to provide for the increase in pupil numbers in Exeter. Pupils are taught in single age classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Years 3, 4, 5, and 6. Years 1 and 2 are taught in five mixed Year 1 and Year 2 classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in mathematics, particularly in Years 1 to Year 4, so it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - making sure that pupils who have slipped behind in their learning are given the right work to help them catch up quickly
  - improving the marking of pupils' work
  - checking pupils' understand the guidance they have been given and are learning from this advice
  - providing challenge and appropriate work for the most-able pupils to ensure they make consistently good progress.
- Increase the proportion of pupils making good progress in mathematics by:
  - developing whole school approaches to the teaching of mathematics so that teachers develop pupils' mathematical understanding more effectively
  - ensuring teachers set work which develops pupils' mathematical thinking so that pupils speed up the progress they make
  - setting work which challenges the most-able pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they play a leading role in driving improvements in teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics
  - making sure teachers are skilled in using assessment information effectively to set work which enables all pupils to make good progress
  - ensuring governors gather first-hand information so they hold leaders to account for improving the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and governors have not ensured that all teaching is good. As a result, there is inconsistency across classes and year groups in the progress pupils are making, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders have not used information about pupils' progress effectively to drive improvement. This is because their views of the school's performance have been too positive. Consequently, the leadership team has been slow in identifying and tackling some underachievement.
- Leaders, including governors, do not have a clear enough picture of achievement and progress of all pupils across the school. For example, pupils in some year groups have fallen behind. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good progress in English and mathematics.
- The teaching of mathematics is generally too variable. The school has acted to strengthen leadership of this subject. The school's action plans detail changes already underway. For example, the school has reorganised the support for pupils who need to catch up. However, it is too early to see the impact of these changes.
- Other middle leaders have identified improvements needed in their subjects. However, they do not currently have sufficient skills to check the impact their actions are having. For example, they are not rigorously holding teachers to account for pupils' progress. This means there is inconsistency in the progress pupils are making in some subjects.
- Procedures to manage staff performance have been strengthened. Leaders identify and tackle underperformance. All staff targets are now linked to the standards expected of teachers. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving teaching.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making faster progress, particularly in writing and reading. This is because leaders have focused on providing effective support for these pupils.
- Pupils benefit from taking part in many extra-curricular activities. These range from numerous sporting clubs to residential visits to London. Visits to the theatre, the links with a school in Sri Lanka and the high quality art work pupils produce serve to develop their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development successfully. This aspect of the school's work prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. However, the curriculum is not being used effectively to develop pupils' basic skills in mathematics.
- The school uses the sport funding successfully to improve the provision for physical education. The school uses specialist coaches and the expertise of the deputy headteacher to run additional activities. Pupils' performance levels and participation rates in activities and tournaments have increased. The athletics and tag rugby teams both competed recently in the county finals. This high quality provision is increasing pupils' self-esteem and understanding of living a healthy lifestyle.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements. Leaders have created a safe and calm environment. Pupils say they enjoy school. All parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire would recommend this school to another parent.
- The local authority adviser identified a dip in standards in 2014 and is now providing support. The school has made use of the partnership with local schools in Devon. This is helping the school adapt its work to meet the demands of the new National Curriculum, particularly in mathematics. However, it is too early to see the long-term impact of this work.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body knows the school's main areas for improvement. Governors know progress in mathematics in some year groups needs to improve. However, they do not have a detailed understanding of the inconsistencies in achievement and progress across the school.
  - Governors rely on information given to them by the headteacher, rather than checking for themselves. They do not always hold leaders to account by asking challenging questions in meetings. They are not checking in sufficient detail that plans in place to bring about improvements are making a difference.
  - Governors know how additional funding is being spent. They check that it is making a positive difference to pupils' progress. This is also true of the sport funding. The school is successful in closing the gaps between those pupils eligible for extra funding and those who are not, particularly in writing.
  - The governing body oversees the process used to hold teachers and the headteacher to account. The governors link teachers' pay and performance, but have not expected enough of their leaders in securing the improvements needed in teaching.
  - The governing body's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Governors are vigilant in carrying out this aspect of their work.

- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils

### requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. There is not enough good teaching to enable all pupils to learn well. When work is not set at the right level, pupils become bored and restless. As a result, in a few lessons, pupils lose interest and some off-task chatter takes place. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not as good as they should be at these times. This is why behaviour is not good.
- Pupils behave well around the school and at playtimes. They play together sensibly in the outside areas and are polite to adults and each other. They enjoy each other's company, showing that the school fosters positive relationships. This is having a positive impact on attendance. Pupils arrive on time for school and attendance meets the national average.
- Leaders keep detailed and precise behaviour logs. These show incidents are rare, but are always followed up. All parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire agree this school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. Staff all agree that behaviour is consistently well managed. Exclusions are rare.
- The breakfast club is well run. It is a calm and safe place to start the day. This settled start helps pupils begin their school day ready to begin their work.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders, including governors, are rigorous in ensuring pupils are safe in school. The site is secure and leaders ensure all safeguarding requirements are being met. All training is up to date. Minutes of governors' meetings record frequent discussions around keeping pupils' safe. The governors act quickly on any improvements needed. This ensures pupils are safe at this school.
- Pupils all say they feel safe in school and bullying is rare. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. For example, older pupils spoke knowledgeably about how to keep safe when using the internet. They are confident any problem will be resolved quickly. They know name calling and inappropriate language are not allowed. This contributes to the school's calm and well-ordered learning environment.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The headteacher has taken action to address some underperformance and provide training and support. This is beginning to have a positive impact on improving teaching. Although there are now pockets of good teaching, too much typically, requires improvement.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching in English and mathematics. However, middle leaders lack the skills to identify precise improvement points for teachers when judging the quality of pupils' learning. This is not helping teachers improve their teaching quickly enough.
- Teaching of mathematics is not consistent across the school. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. In these lessons, teachers are not challenging pupils' thinking sufficiently to enable pupils to develop a secure knowledge of mathematical skills. Gaps in understanding remain, which is preventing pupils learning as well as they should.
- Teachers are adjusting their plans in English and mathematics to suit pupils in the new Years 1 and 2 mixed-age classes. This includes the most-able pupils. Teachers have yet to ensure they are consistently planning lessons to engage all pupils. At times, pupils find the work too easy or too hard. Progress slows and a few pupils' attitudes to learning are not as good as they should be.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils read with expression and enjoyment and are knowledgeable about a range of authors. Most pupils read confidently and fluently by the end of Year 2.
- Where teaching is most successful, teachers have secure subject knowledge. They understand what the pupils are able to do and what they need to do next. They plan work to enable all pupils to learn effectively, including those eligible for extra funding and those who speak English as an additional language. For example, teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2 is good. As a result, a higher proportion than average reaches the standards expected in the end of year check.
- Marking is inconsistent. Teachers' comments tend to focus on presentation. Teachers do not always set out what pupils need to do to extend thinking and understanding. The school has introduced new guidelines for marking pupils' work. However, teachers are not routinely checking pupils' learning is improving following the guidance they give. This is not helping pupils make rapid progress.
- Teaching assistants provide good support, especially for disabled pupils or those with special educational

needs, and those eligible for extra funding. They know the pupils well and deal sensitively with their different needs. On a few occasions, teaching assistants do not have high enough expectations. They do not challenge pupils' thinking sufficiently in lessons. Learning and progress for these pupils then slow.

- Pupils make the best progress when they enjoy learning and teachers challenge and inspire them to achieve. A small proportion of Year 6 pupils achieved the very highest levels in writing in 2014. Teachers in Year 6 give a high priority to developing skills in English. Strong teaching and expert guidance have resulted in the highest quality writing, seen in books during the inspection. This is helping pupils to make up lost ground from previous years.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Standards of attainment are broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, progress is variable across the school, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' learning and progress speeds up in Years 5 and 6, enabling pupils to reach standards which are at least average for their age. Whilst they catch up in Years 5 and 6, not all reach the standards they are capable of. This why achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils in Year 1 achieve above average results in their phonics check. Pupils quickly learn to use their phonic knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle unknown words. This is helping them to learn to read quickly. Nearly half of all pupils achieve the higher levels in reading at the end of Year 6.
- Due to the inconsistencies in progress in Years 1 to 4, pupils are not making as much progress as they are capable of, especially in mathematics. Leaders accept achievement should be improved.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is variable. Although the proportion reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics meets the national average at the end of Year 6, they make inconsistent progress across the school. This is because work set does not always challenge them sufficiently to extend their knowledge and understanding.
- The school is using its pupil premium funding well. At the end of Year 6 in 2013, the attainment gap, between pupils eligible for additional funding and that of other pupils in the school, closed to one term in writing and two terms in reading and mathematics. The gap closed further in reading in 2014 to less than 6 months. The school's gaps are now smaller than the national picture, except in mathematics. The school uses the additional funding successfully to ensure that these pupils have the same opportunities to succeed as all others. No child is discriminated against and the school promotes equality of opportunity successfully.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making expected progress from their starting points. The school provided very good care and support for a large group of these pupils in 2014, enabling them to achieve their potential.
- Pupils achieve well in sport and many reach high standards. Pupils produce a high standard of art work, which is displayed around the school.

### The early years provision

### is good

- Children start school with levels of skills and knowledge that are broadly as expected for their age, although this masks variations between individual children. Teaching is consistently good. Relationships between staff and children are very strong. As a result, children settle quickly. They make good progress with their personal, social and emotional skills.
- Although children observed during the inspection had only been in school for a few days, they were able to share and cooperate well together. Behaviour is good. Children can already line up and walk sensibly to the dining room for lunch.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed effectively. Teachers plan a wide variety of exciting activities for children to experience. For example, children re-told a story together, adding their own dance movements and songs. This high quality learning environment ensures children are excited and keen to learn.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about their child's first few days in school. They praise the staff who they describe as 'approachable'. Teachers carry out home visits before children start school. This is enabling children to settle quickly and get off to a flying start.
- Teaching assistants support children's learning by taking every opportunity to extend vocabulary and the learning of all groups. As a result, children with disabilities and those with special educational needs have settled and are enjoying their first few days in school.

- Teachers record children’s progress throughout the year. As a result, teachers know the children’s strengths and needs in detail. They use this information to plan appropriate next steps of learning which ensure children make good progress.
- This aspect is not outstanding as teaching and children’s achievement, although good, are not yet outstanding.

## 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>	134174
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	444097

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>	Foundation School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	427
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reg Edwardson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caren Brooks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15–16 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01392 206585
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