

# Bitterne Park Primary School

Manor Farm Road, Southampton, SO18 1NX

**Inspection dates** 25–26 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b> <b>1</b>
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Early years provision	Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Senior leaders provide outstanding, inspirational leadership and set extremely high expectations. They check rigorously to ensure these are met by all staff. As a result, teaching is outstanding and pupils make rapid progress.
- Standards have risen continuously since the merger of the two schools, and are now above average. All groups of pupils learn well, including pupils who are eligible for additional support and those speaking English as an additional language.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from carefully crafted support which accelerates their learning, so that they overcome the difficulties they face. The most able pupils are also enabled to reach the highest standards they are capable of.
- The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop the skills and knowledge they need to face the next stage of their learning with confidence. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school has excellent systems to track pupils' progress and to check the quality of teaching. These systems ensure teachers and leaders have a clear idea of what needs to improve, and that these developments happen quickly.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because they are eager to learn. They put a great deal of effort into their work and into improving their skills and understanding.
- A consistent approach to managing behaviour for all pupils means pupils' behaviour is almost always excellent. The analysis of the few behavioural incidents which occur would benefit from further refinement s parents and carers are not always clear how behaviour is managed.
- Pupils are impressively polite, courteous and kind to one another, as well as to any adults in the school. They enjoy helping around the school, as well as more widely in their community and further afield.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a further strength of the school. Opportunities for children to explore and develop their learning and skills are very well organised. Children settle quickly into their routines and are happy and safe.
- Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school in great detail. They receive accurate information from senior leaders, and validate this appropriately by visiting the school and talking to pupils, and parents and carers. They provide strong support and ask challenging questions of senior leaders, to hold them to account.
- Together with senior leaders, governors make sure that all the statutory requirements are met, including those to keep pupils safe. They also ensure the environment is well maintained and that all adults who work with pupils are safe to do so.
- The vast majority of parents and carers expressed very positive views about the changes that have been implemented and the improvements in learning. They feel their children are well looked after.

## Information about this inspection

- Three of the inspectors were in the school for two days, with a fourth inspector present for the first day.
- The inspectors spent the majority of their time in lessons, looking at teaching and the work pupils were doing. About half of the observations were carried out together with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, pupils, teachers and governors. They reviewed documents provided by the school, including: information about pupils' achievement; records of meetings; policies and procedures, particularly those about keeping pupils safe; records of senior leaders' checks on the quality of teaching; plans for the curriculum; and plans to bring further improvements.
- Inspectors took into account the 91 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, and also spoke to a number of parents and carers informally. The 30 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were also considered.

## Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Linda Rowley	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional Inspector
Lily Evans	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than average, the result of a merger between an infant school and a junior school which previously occupied the site. There are three classes in each year group. The new school has been open for just over a year.
- Most pupils are White British. A minority come from a wide range of ethnicities. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are receiving school support is average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional support through the pupil premium funding is average. This is extra funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children looked after.
- The current headteacher became the executive headteacher of the junior school in January 2013. The school then merged with the infant school in September 2013. The executive headteacher is also executive headteacher of two other schools: Holy Family Catholic Primary School and Sinclair Nursery and Primary School, both within the local authority of Southampton. Other senior leadership roles are also shared between the three schools. The headteacher and senior leaders also provide support for other schools locally, nationally and internationally.
- The school has eight teachers newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

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

- Further refine the school's procedures to record and analyse pupils' behaviour so that these are as comprehensive and well organised as other systems in the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The executive headteacher has worked successfully with senior leaders to develop highly effective systems to track the progress of pupils and to check the quality of teaching and learning. This action has resulted in rapid and sustained improvements across all areas of the school.
- Members of the senior leadership team lead by example. They help with planning the exciting learning, demonstrate effective teaching and provide excellent support so that teaching improves swiftly. In particular, leaders at all levels are extremely effective at helping NQTs to develop excellent skills.
- Middle leaders are exceptionally effective because there is a rigorous and well-founded programme of development for them. They are nurtured and encouraged by senior leaders. Less experienced teachers also have opportunities to participate so that leadership is developed at all levels.
- Teachers are strongly encouraged to think deeply about the way they teach to make this even more effective. Together with the coaching and mentoring they receive, this is a key factor in ensuring that agreed approaches are implemented consistently. Leaders' management of staff performance is extremely well planned and effective in promoting excellent teaching.
- Senior leaders have worked with teachers to develop an exciting curriculum. This gives pupils a splendid range of rich experiences and provides many opportunities for them to apply their skills in writing, reading and mathematics. The school makes excellent use of resources within the local area, and also helps pupils become very confident when using computers for a wide range of purposes.
- The school benefits greatly from close ties with other partner schools, which enables expertise to be shared. This has particularly helped to improve the school's support for pupils with special educational needs, which has become highly effective as a result.
- The school checks the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils very closely and uses this information well to evaluate and improve the support they receive. This ensures these pupils make excellent progress, rapidly closing the gap between their achievement and other pupils'.
- The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is a further strength of the school. Collective worship, celebration assemblies, opportunities to think philosophically, musical instrumental tuition and a focus on a variety of cultural and religious celebrations, all contribute richly to the topics pupils study. As a result, pupils are confident, optimistic about their futures and well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders have made sure that they use the additional sports funding wisely. Teachers are given valuable opportunities to develop particular expertise in teaching physical education and to share this with colleagues. As a result, there are more opportunities for playing sports, the quality of physical education has improved and pupils enjoy more chances to compete.
- The school provides parents and carers with many helpful opportunities to find out about their children's progress, and how they can help their children learn at home. The vast majority of parents and carers are highly positive about the improvements that have come so quickly and are impressed by the success of the merger. Teachers are readily available if any parents or carers have concerns.
- The school works very well with the local authority to provide examples of best practice to other schools. This includes sharing the school's expertise in the Early Years Foundation Stage, coaching and mentoring for teachers, the development of middle leaders, and assessing, recording and evaluating pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors ensure they receive useful information from a wide range of sources, including the views of pupils, parents and carers, and teachers.
  - Governors check information about how well pupils are doing. They follow closely any changes that are put in place to make sure that improvements are swift. Governors evaluate their own skills and knowledge. Where necessary they seek out appropriate training to improve the way they support and challenge the school, and to keep up to date with new developments.
  - The governing body ensures that the school's resources are used carefully and they plan prudently for future needs. They take good account of the quality of teaching when making decisions about teachers' pay. Governors encourage staff by making sure they are rewarded for leading improvements.
  - Governors and senior leaders make sure that statutory requirements for keeping pupils safe are met.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school and say that the teachers make learning fun.
- Attendance is above average and pupils are keen to get back to work after break times. They work equally as well in groups, on their own or with the whole class. Their excellent attitudes to learning make a strong contribution towards their achievement.
- Pupils are immensely polite, courteous and thoughtful around the school. Older pupils readily show kindness to younger pupils, and they all make sure that everyone has someone to play with or talk to.
- Inspectors agreed with the vast majority of parents, and with pupils, that behaviour is excellent. They found that the school has excellent ways of managing and encouraging the best behaviour so that there has been a decrease in incidents causing concern. Behaviour is monitored closely, although procedures to record this are not as well developed as other systems in the school.
- Pupils feel that their views about their learning and their ideas about how to improve the school even further are taken into account and that teachers and senior leaders go out of their way to consult them.
- Pupils display a great passion for learning, for their school and for their community. Their commitment to the local community has been demonstrated in their campaign to improve and use the 'green space' near the school.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are very well informed about how they can help keep themselves safe, for example when they are using the internet. They feel that the environment of the school is very safe, and that there is always an adult around they can talk to if they are worried about anything.
- They are very aware of the need to help each other to learn, through the feedback they give each other in their books and by behaving well in lessons. Their work on philosophy gives them a strong sense of well-being and purpose within the school and for their lives ahead.
- Pupils say that bullying can happen at the school, but it is rare, taken seriously by staff and dealt with very quickly. Where necessary, the school works closely with external agencies to support identified vulnerable pupils so that they are helped to overcome the issues they face.

**The quality of teaching is outstanding**

- Much teaching is outstanding. Pupils' achievement in national assessments, the work in their books and the school's records show that teaching is highly effective in helping all groups of pupils to learn well.
- Teachers avidly share ideas about what they are teaching and have many opportunities to watch each other at work. This helps promote a culture of learning. Pupils pick up on this and develop very positive attitudes to learning. They like the challenges they are given and work with urgency and purpose.
- Pupils benefit from highly effective feedback during lessons, as well as in their books. The way adults give this, including through marking, has been refined and clarified so that it is helpfully consistent across the school. Teachers and teaching assistants provide pupils with just the right amount of support and input, while encouraging them to reflect frequently about how well they have done and what they have learnt.
- Teachers are very skilled at using the resources around them, and particularly the interactive whiteboards. They also use a range of other electronic resources to engage pupils such as laptops and tablet computers. A pupil expressed the view of many when they said that teachers are never a bore and have amazing ideas. Pupils also said that teachers make you want to do your best.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask excellent questions of pupils to check how well they understand what they are learning. They also encourage pupils to ask questions themselves and share their learning with others. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them and are used to improving their work quickly.
- The school has developed its own, effective system to teach phonics (linking letters and the sounds they make). This is very successful. Consequently pupils rapidly become confident readers. They are also confident using these skills when they spell complex words. In 2014, a higher proportion of pupils than nationally met the requirements of the government phonics check in Year 1. Older pupils are enthusiastic readers, able to glean the information they need from a range of texts. They enjoy reading a great deal.
- The support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is carefully considered,

developed and evaluated. The school makes excellent use of a wide range of expertise from the local partnership of schools, and has established strong links with other professionals who provide a variety of effective support, including for speech and language.

- There is excellent support for those who speak English as an additional language, which ensures they make rapid progress.

### **The achievement of pupils** is outstanding

- Standards have risen continuously since the merger of the two schools. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, the proportions of pupils who achieved at least the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics were all above the national averages. From their different starting points, this shows that almost all pupils made outstanding progress during Key Stage Two.
- Pupils also make rapid progress during Year 1 and Year 2. In 2013 at the end of Year 2, more pupils than usual reached the higher levels.
- Pupils' work in their books shows how well they are able to use their writing or mathematical skills in other subjects. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils are well trained to take much of the responsibility for making improvements to their work, and teachers need only provide guidance when it is needed. Different groups of pupils, including girls and boys, pupils from minority ethnic groups and the most able pupils all make rapid progress.
- Across the school, teachers make sure there is always more challenging work available for pupils when they are ready to be stretched further, however quickly they get to grips with what they are doing. Pupils work hard to complete their work quickly and to a high standard.
- The school provides many valuable opportunities for the most able pupils to extend their skills and knowledge, and to use these in exciting projects. The additional support these pupils receive from specialist teachers means they excel and reach very high standards.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported skilfully by well-informed adults. This means these pupils make excellent progress, often closing the gap with and performing as well as other pupils in the school. Similarly, effective support for pupils at the early stages of learning English means they too make rapid progress.
- Pupils who are supported through the pupil premium benefit from smaller classes for mathematics and English lessons. They receive accurate, extra attention from the adults because their particular needs are known very precisely. They make excellent progress and catch up quickly with other pupils in the school.

### **The early years provision** is outstanding

- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. The children are organised into learning groups which benefit from the expertise displayed by all the adults. This gives them an exciting diet of learning opportunities each day, on which they thrive. The adults are adept at asking probing questions, giving children time to think about their answers or find a solution, without stepping in to support them too quickly. As a result, the children learn to work hard and independently.
- Although the children currently in Reception had only been in school full time for a few days when inspectors visited, they had settled very quickly and were already greatly enjoying learning. Parents and carers were highly impressed with the way their children have settled in and how keen they are to get to school in the morning. They feel well informed about what their children are learning and have already had opportunities to understand how they can help at home, both with reading and numbers.
- Teachers provide highly motivating scenarios for children to explore. For example children had an excellent day solving lots of problems and exploring clues to find a favourite bear who went missing. Other children greatly enjoyed digging for potatoes and exploring the growth of plants. A child said they were sad that the following day was Saturday because there would be no school.
- When children join the Reception class, the school's records show they typically have levels of skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. A higher than usual proportion of children join with particularly weak communication skills. They make an excellent start in their learning because they are so well supported, teaching is excellent and adults constantly focus on what they need to learn next. By the end of Reception, children have made up ground and are at least in line with the expectations for their age; many are working at even higher levels. In particular, they develop their writing and number skills very quickly and are well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Arrangements to keep children safe in the early years are excellent.

## 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>	116090
<b>Local authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	447810

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	625
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Howard Whitehead
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gerida Montague
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 554541
<b>Fax number</b>	02380 679289
<b>Email address</b>	info@bppsive.net



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