

# Butts Primary School

Butts Road, Walsall, West Midlands, WS4 2AH

**Inspection dates** 7–8 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and executive headteacher, the school's ethos and quality of education have improved rapidly.
- Senior and middle leaders are highly successful in promoting effective teaching and ensuring that staff readily take full responsibility for improving pupils' achievements.
- Teaching is good across the school; there are some excellent features in teachers' classroom management skills and the way teachers use assessments to set targets that help pupils improve.
- The strong promotion of pupils' literacy skills has been highly successful in building on their strengths in reading and addressing weaknesses in writing.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is good and equips children particularly well with reading, writing and personal skills.
- Pupils' standards and progress by the end of Key Stage 2 and their attendance across the school have improved markedly since the last inspection.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and participate enthusiastically in a wide and broadening range of clubs and activities. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The school is well regarded by parents and pupils alike who feel that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Governors have worked successfully to reorganise school leadership and smoothly set in place arrangements for the new federation.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels of attainment by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Too few pupils exceed the expected rate of progress by the end of Year 6.
- More-able pupils are not always given tasks which are sufficiently demanding to deepen their understanding and skills.
- Standards of writing for pupils in a minority of classes are still too low, reflecting a legacy of underachievement in the past.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes over 13 lessons, and visited many classes and small-group sessions in literacy and numeracy for short periods. They looked at pupils' books, and heard pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 read. Observations of other aspects of the school's work were also made, such as assemblies, reading clubs in the library, and a meeting of the newly-established school council.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and school staff, including senior and middle leaders. Informal discussions also took place with staff and pupils, including in the playground and canteen during lunchtime and breaktime. A telephone discussion was held with the local authority's school improvement leader and an external consultant providing support to the school.
- There were insufficient responses to the online Parent View questionnaire to provide evidence for the inspection. Inspectors instead held discussions with parents in the playground before school on both days of the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessment records, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, its safeguarding policies, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.

## Inspection team

Ian Hodgkinson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Victor Chaffey

Additional Inspector

Rowena Green

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

- Butts is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost three quarters of pupils are of minority ethnic, mainly Pakistani, heritage. Over half of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A high proportion of the pupils – around half – are disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- No pupils attend alternative provision.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- After the school was placed in special measures following its last inspection in May 2013, it received interim leadership support from the headteacher and deputy headteacher of Alumwell Junior School nearby. Following the resignation of the previous headteacher in February 2014, the governing body sought to formally federate with Alumwell Junior. Federation was ratified in May 2014, and the two schools now have a single governing body. Alumwell's headteacher is now also executive headteacher of the federation. The former Alumwell deputy headteacher, who provided interim support, was appointed as substantive headteacher of Butts in May 2014.

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

- Improve teaching by:
  - ensuring that more-able pupils are always given sufficiently demanding tasks that deepen their understanding and extend their skills
  - ensuring that, throughout the school, pupils respond fully to teachers' suggestions for improvements in their work, as they already do very effectively in most classes.
- Improve pupils' achievement by:
  - increasing the proportion reaching the higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2
  - accelerating rates of progress for all pupils, especially the more able
  - continuing to improve pupils' standards in writing across the school
  - evaluating more precisely the impact of specific programmes to support pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- From their first involvement with the school as interim leaders, the headteacher and executive headteacher were quick to diagnose the school's weaknesses and have acted decisively to put effective remedies in place. They have focused firmly on improving the quality of teaching, building leadership capacity at all levels, developing pride in the school among pupils, staff, and parents, and overcoming the barriers to achievement presented by shortcomings in pupils' literacy and language skills. While there remain aspects of a legacy of underachievement to address, the headteachers have had an outstanding impact in improving outcomes, provision and capacity to improve further in a little over a year.
- Action planning is clear and precise, and responds quickly to any weaknesses in performance highlighted by internal or external monitoring activities.
- Weak teaching has been eradicated through the firm and consistent application of clear performance management standards linked to pupils' progress and the quality of classroom teaching.
- The quality of middle leadership has been transformed through the excellent professional development and support for postholders, including subject leadership for English and mathematics, leadership of special educational needs provision, and leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Leaders, including governors, have been empowered by the headteachers' determination to ensure that, throughout the school, teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are reliable, accurate and subject to extensive internal and external moderation. Leaders' monitoring of performance and achievement across the school is therefore well developed and their dialogue with teachers about how to improve outcomes is open and constructive.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and other staff have been energised by their leaders' clear vision and collaborative approach to school improvement. Staff work and plan together highly effectively in teams.
- The pupil premium has been largely and successfully used to fund additional teaching resources to enable all pupils to achieve their progress targets. As a result, there is no pattern of significant gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others through the school.
- While the monitoring of pupil progress is generally very effective, individual programmes of intervention to support pupils' literacy and mathematical skills are not always rigorously measured and evaluated to ensure that they have the desired impact.
- Spending of resources from the school sport premium has been well planned and highly effective in promoting a significant increase in the range of school sports on offer, by improving resources and coaching within lessons and through extra-curricular activity.
- The school's communications with parents, including those who find engagement with a school difficult, have improved markedly with a lively new website, informative newsletters, and more effective direct contacts with members of staff. Highly effective parental liaison has been responsible for a sharp reduction in the numbers of pupils who are persistently absent or late to school. Parents are overwhelmingly strong in their praise for the work of the school and confident that their children are safe and happy.
- The sustained rise in pupils' achievements has been supported by a relentless focus on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and ensuring that these are applied and developed through all subjects. Leaders and staff have invested heavily in time and better resources to promote a culture throughout the school where children read regularly and for pleasure.
- Pupils enjoy a broad and rich curriculum which develops their knowledge and skills across subjects and which encourages them to explore, in some depth, personal, social, health, economic and currently topical issues. A new leadership team structure has been established to ensure that the school develops its curriculum and assessment systems to fully meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum.
- Assembly and religious education programmes promote tolerance and understanding of a range of beliefs within a broadly Christian framework. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is central to the ethos of the school, and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school has drawn very successfully on external support, particularly through support for leadership and teaching through links with Alumwell Junior School. The local authority facilitated this arrangement, and has provided highly effective support to develop the capacity of middle leaders. The local authority's ongoing monitoring of the school's work has been more variable, but its new 'improvement review group' approach is far more rigorous and helpful in holding the school to account.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body at Butts Primary School worked exceptionally hard to secure the future success of the school through federation with Alumwell Junior School. The federated governing body contains a

balanced proportion of governors from both schools, ensuring that governors maintain an effective working knowledge and very close working relationship with Butts.

- Governors play a strong role in maintaining the ethos of the school, for example through contributing balanced and highly reflective assemblies.
- Since the last inspection, governors have significantly improved their skills in understanding school performance and holding leaders to account. They have played a full and active part in review groups which have monitored the school. They have supported the headteachers in establishing new performance management criteria and in challenging underperforming staff.
- The governing body has ensured that the school has remained in sound financial health despite the turmoil in staffing and leadership in recent years. Governors understand how the pupil premium is spent and monitor data on gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others.
- The governing body ensures that the school meets requirements to safeguard the well-being of its pupils.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good, both in lessons and at social times of the day.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to learning in lessons, and their readiness to attend extra study groups, including after school, make a strong contribution to their rapidly improving achievement. The library is well used at lunchtime, reading clubs are well attended, and a new group for the more able is raising expectations for their reading and comprehension.
- Pupils greatly appreciate the significant broadening of the range of clubs and activities they can join. They take great pride in the successes of new sports clubs in fixtures with other schools, and doing well in local inter-school activities in mathematics and literacy.
- As a result of the high profile given to good attendance within the school and strong liaison with parents, pupils' attendance has improved very sharply and is now above average. Rates of persistent absence have fallen markedly. Pupils are very punctual to lessons and to school.
- Exclusions are very rare and incidents of poor behaviour in class or the playground occur very infrequently. Good relationships prevail between pupils, and teachers take every opportunity to encourage them to work constructively and collaboratively in class. The school has records of some incidents of racist language or name calling, but these are dealt with swiftly and effectively so that pupils learn that it is unacceptable.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. A strong programme of personal, social, health and economic education helps pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe from harm.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel very safe in the school, and they and those parents who spoke with inspectors reported no incidents of bullying. The school makes sure that pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, for example with a programme of e-safety awareness.
- Staff are well trained in general child protection procedures, and report and record all incidents or disclosures quickly and effectively. Records showing the actions taken and the final outcomes are not always comprehensive enough, though, to clearly analyse the impact of the school's approaches.
- Some governors have received training in recognising signs of extremist behaviour and radicalisation, but this has yet to be extended to all staff.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers manage their classes very well to ensure that pupils make at least good progress. Lessons often proceed at a brisk pace through a range of engaging activities which enables pupils to behave well and remain well focused on their tasks.
- Occasionally, teachers use their confident subject knowledge to 'seize the moment' and completely refocus their lesson to follow up a comment or observation by a pupil. This leads to some exciting teaching and learning, particularly in Year 6 where pupils sometimes follow up current events or issues through web-based research, investigations, writing and debate. Such approaches make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Teachers plan closely with teaching assistants so that adults are often deployed to work with small groups.

As a result of focused training in the summer term, the quality of this collaboration and the quality of teaching assistants' work with their groups have improved sharply and are now good. Pupils across the attainment range benefit from closer involvement and interaction with adults in these small groups, especially those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English and those with special educational needs.

- Teachers frequently encourage pupils to talk about their work with their 'talk partners', thereby improving speaking skills and clarifying thinking before writing.
- Teachers mark work assiduously, and give pupils detailed feedback on what went well and how work could be improved. In most instances, pupils are expected to respond to improvement points by completing 'gap tasks', but this is not yet consistently applied throughout the school.
- A strong focus on improving pupils' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills permeates all elements of teaching. As a consequence, pupils are expected to apply clear expectations for writing and presentation in their books in all subjects. Similarly, increasing opportunities are being provided for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, and especially science.
- Teachers generally make very good use of assessment information to set pupils clear targets for raising overall work quality and for improving their writing and literacy skills. However, expectations are sometimes too low for higher attainers, and they are not required to move quickly enough to challenging tasks which require them to acquire a deeper understanding of subject matter or apply the skills they have learned with accuracy and independence.
- Teachers' questioning of pupils in whole-class discussions is invariably skilfully managed to ensure the full participation of pupils across the ability range; although, on occasions, pupils need more time to reflect and think about their responses.
- Parents have favourable views about the quality and quantity of homework and the effectiveness of extra support given to their children where they have difficulties.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment and progress have improved strongly since the last inspection. Provisional, unvalidated results from Year 6 tests and assessments for 2014 indicate further improvement from those in 2013.
- Taking all data together, attainment overall is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2. It is above average in reading. Given that children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally below those expected for their age, this represents good progress.
- Year 6 assessments for 2013 and 2014 show that the school is very successful in enabling pupils to reach the nationally expected Level 4 and to make the expected rate of progress across Key Stage 2.
- Although improving, the school has been less successful in getting pupils to reach the higher levels of attainment, or to accelerate the progress of pupils to enable enough of them to make better than expected progress. The achievement of the relatively small number of more-able pupils has not been strong enough, and is a school improvement priority.
- In the past, pupils' progress, and especially the more able, had been slowed by weak and uninspiring teaching in some classes in Key Stages 1 and 2. This is no longer the case. In all classes, pupils are now learning well and evidence from their books and their assessments show that their progress is improving quickly. There remains a legacy of underachievement in a small number of classes, which particularly shows in weaknesses in their writing, spelling and punctuation, but it is clear that teachers are now rigorously addressing such shortcomings.
- Pupils' reading skills are developed very successfully across the school. A strong emphasis on securing children's phonic skills (the sounds letters make) in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that the children are confident readers from an early age. Pupils read often and with good technical accuracy. The new guided reading programmes across the school are successful in helping pupils develop their skills of comprehension and inference too. The proportion of pupils that passes the Year 1 reading test is consistently above average, and results at the end of Key Stage 2 are now also above average.
- In mathematics, pupils have very secure basic calculation skills, and are increasingly given opportunities to apply these to the solution of challenging problems. A display board in the school foyer celebrates their successes and the breadth of problems they encounter.
- There are no significant gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. In validated assessments for Year 6 in 2013, disadvantaged pupils had higher attainment than their peers in all subjects. In most subjects they were a term-and-a-half ahead of their peers, whilst in reading they were almost a year ahead.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress overall as a result of careful

management and planning of provision, and regular reviews of their progress. Current school data show particularly good progress for pupils in Key Stage 2.

- The good progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is promoted strongly by the whole-school focus on language and literacy.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children join the Nursery with skills that are generally below those expected for their age. By the time they leave the Reception class, the proportion demonstrating a good level of development is close to the national average. Children make good progress overall, and especially so in their personal and social development.
- Children's reading, early writing and number skills develop very effectively in Reception as a result of carefully-structured and very well-managed programmes. Least progress is made in expressive arts and design.
- Children are well taught and enjoy their learning. In Reception, they respond very well to their teacher's expectations, moving readily, for example, from highly animated whole-class singing and story recitation to quiet and focused reading or writing practice. They are therefore well-prepared for work in Key Stage 1.
- The classrooms and outdoor learning environments are well organised and well resourced, although the outdoor learning environment is not always used to best effect to promote children's active learning and creativity.
- Children who speak English as an additional language are well supported by staff who can speak their home language.
- Children who are disabled and have special educational needs were observed making significant progress in holding pencils and making marks, moving to early letter formation, as a result of skilful teaching by teaching assistants.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Assessments of children are very accurate and subject to extensive moderation; they are well used by staff to ensure that activities are planned to promote children's good progress. Electronic recording of assessments enables parents to receive well-presented records of individual achievements.

## 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>	104147
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	450470

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	236
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Orton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Angela Hill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8–9 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 721073
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