

# Blenheim Primary School

Blenheim Road, Orpington, BR6 9BH

**Inspection dates** 22–23 October 2014

|                                |                      |                      |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>          | <b>2</b> |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good                 | 2        |
| 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.

- Following a big dip in 2013, standards have risen significantly. Pupils now achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where skilful teaching ensures they make rapid progress and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and assessment is good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Leaders have successfully addressed previous weaknesses in teaching.
- The school’s promotion of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Effective leadership across the school, supported by considerably improved governance, has raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, all groups of pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils behave well and are courteous and respectful; they enjoy coming to school as indicated by their high rates of attendance.
- Regular checks on safeguarding are used to help ensure the school is a very safe place for pupils and staff.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes pupils do not get the feedback from teachers they need to help them move on in their work.
- The least able pupils are not always provided with sufficient resources to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils do not practise their writing across a wide enough range of subjects or use what they have learned in mathematics to solve practical problems.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 teaching sessions, two of which were observed jointly with school leaders. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils’ books and looked at how pupils were learning across a range of subjects.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, two governors, the local authority’s school improvement leader, and school staff. An inspector also spoke to the Chair of the Governing Body on the telephone.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school’s attainment and progress information, planning and monitoring documentation, the school’s improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, the safeguarding policies and behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 33 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about the school’s work and listened to some pupils read.

## Inspection team

Nasim Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Hicks

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage which now consists of two full-time Reception classes. There is no Nursery provision.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils from Black or Black British backgrounds comprise the next largest ethnic group.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils, is above average. The majority of pupils currently in the school are in receipt of this funding.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average, as is the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had much staff turnover since the previous inspection. The current headteacher and her full-time deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2013.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
  - always give the least able pupils the resources they need to make the progress of which they are capable
  - give good quality feedback to all pupils about their work and ensure that pupils follow it up.
- Raise standards in mathematics and writing further by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to improve their mathematical skills by solving practical problems
  - ensuring that all pupils can practise and hone their writing skills across a wide range of subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Since her appointment, the headteacher, ably supported by an effective leadership team, has transformed the school culture into one where teachers have high expectations of every child and a strong determination to do everything possible to break down barriers to learning. As a result, standards across the school rose sharply in 2014 and all the evidence shows that this strong picture is being sustained in every year group.
- Robust systems are in place to hold staff to account and teachers receive support tailored to their needs. For example, there is presently a sharp focus on pupils' progress and learning, with specific areas for each teacher to develop. The coaching and modelling provided by leaders and, where necessary, external support, have resulted in the quality of teaching improving significantly since the previous inspection.
- Other well-targeted measures have also brought about improvements. For example, a focus on mental mathematics has resulted in significantly improved standards in this key subject.
- The leadership of mathematics, English and the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Subject leaders are skilful in using the school's detailed information about pupils' progress to pinpoint those pupils who need extra help. As a result, pupils are making good progress and the likelihood of a pupil falling through the net is now much lower.
- Additional government funding is used well to improve the education of disadvantaged pupils. Some of the funding has been used to recruit additional teaching assistants who are well trained by the school to provide high quality support for eligible pupils. These initiatives have significantly raised the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The primary sport funding is being used well. Skilled sports coaches have been recruited to work with teachers and improve their teaching of physical education. The improved participation of pupils in sporting activities is having a good impact on their health and well-being.
- Pupils enjoy studying a wide range of subjects. Good quality provision in music, Spanish and physical education enriches pupils' experience and helps to provide them with a secure foundation for the next stage of their education. However, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to practical problems or to practise their writing across a wide enough range of subjects.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on their learning and everyday experiences and to share their thoughts and feelings in a safe environment. Moreover, a wide range of additional activities, including sport, music and cultural events, successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Effective challenge and support has been provided by the local authority. For example, mathematics, literacy and early years advisers have worked with teachers and subject leaders to attend to any weaknesses.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - At the time of the last inspection, governors lacked the skills to hold the school properly to account. Since then, the membership of the governing body has changed and governors are now much more effective. The governing body has carried out a self-audit to identify gaps and inform its training needs. Training organised by the local authority has improved governors' understanding of information about pupils' progress so that they now know how to compare the school's performance with that of other schools. Governors use the detailed information they receive about the achievement of pupils to ask sharper questions about, for example, the quality of teaching, and to follow things through.
  - Governors receive a range of useful information from school leaders, including a regular analysis of achievement gaps between pupils supported by the pupil premium and their peers. In addition, governors are beginning to acquire a better understanding of the management of teachers' performance, which informs decisions as to whether or not they progress up the pay scale.
  - Governors have effective systems to make sure that efficient safeguarding arrangements are in place, and that statutory requirements are met.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most staff and parents who responded to the questionnaires believe that pupils' behaviour is good and that any poor behaviour is dealt with well. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the vast majority of pupils behave well most of the time.
- Pupils are friendly, polite, helpful and kind to each other and to visitors. Staff are good role models for pupils and have built strong, caring relationships.
- In most lessons, pupils are engrossed in what they are learning about and this helps them to make good progress. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' cues, both verbal and non-verbal, and moving between activities is a seamless process.
- When asked to work in pairs or in groups, pupils cooperate and work well together. Good behaviour over time has meant that there has been a significant reduction in the number of incidents logged. Where there have been logged incidents, the school's records show that they were dealt with effectively.
- Most pupils take great pride in how they present their work. Pupils are proud of their school and share the values it promotes.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that pupils are safe and well looked after.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe on social media sites and when using the internet. They know, for example, not to give out any details about themselves online and to be suspicious about the identity of those they communicate with.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and the negative consequences. Those who spoke to inspectors said that any form of bullying is rare in the school and is dealt with effectively by staff if it happens. Records of the few past incidents showed that they were properly followed through by staff.
- Attendance is above average and persistent absence is low as a result of the efforts the school has made to engage with individual families. Using professionals in the school to work closely with parents in this way is having the desired impact.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is partly the result of the training that leaders have provided for teachers and the regular checking of its impact. Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is typically good, with examples of outstanding practice. The significant rise in standards in 2014 is a direct result of consistently good teaching.
- Teachers explain things clearly. They demonstrate new skills well, for example by using a hundred square in Year 2 to count back in tens. They keep pupils on track, pick up and clarify misconceptions, and ensure that pupils' good progress is maintained.
- Teachers are skilful at probing pupils' understanding and giving them time to think and reason. Pupils respond well to the varying levels of challenge and make strong progress as a result. Effective questioning in lessons enables pupils to think about and improve the quality of their writing, for example when drafting a recount in Year 6.
- Good teaching of reading, writing and mathematics supports the progress of different ability groups with appropriately targeted tasks. As a result, the most able pupils are strongly motivated and demonstrate greater engagement and understanding than in the past.
- Staff who support pupils in need of extra help, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are making a strong contribution to improving standards, especially in writing and mathematics. This is because their work is skilfully planned and they are well trained.
- Teachers regularly mark and assess pupils' work and this aspect of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Although teachers frequently provide feedback to pupils about how they could improve their work, it is not always precise enough in showing pupils what they must do to improve. Some pupils do not always respond to the teachers' feedback and this limits the progress they make.
- Occasionally, less able pupils are not provided with the resources they need to make the best out of their learning.

**The achievement of pupils** is good

- Standards rose significantly in all key stages in 2014 and pupils' progress was consistently strong across the whole school. The school's achievement information is supported by compelling evidence of good progress over time in pupils' books across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In 2013, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average. Since then, leaders have taken clear and decisive action to reverse this decline and now all pupils are achieving well in relation to their starting points. In 2014, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 was significantly higher in reading, writing and mathematics. These higher standards were reflected in the work seen by inspectors.
- The attainment of the most able pupils has also improved and they are making good progress and achieving well. A significantly higher proportion of these pupils are now attaining the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their different starting points, as do disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This is because teachers and support staff give them close attention and work which matches their abilities. White British pupils and those of other ethnic heritages also make good progress from their different starting points. This demonstrates the school's success in promoting good equality of opportunity.
- In 2013, in Key Stage 2, the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school, and between disadvantaged pupils at Blenheim and those nationally, was around five terms in mathematics and four terms in reading and writing. In 2014, these gaps closed substantially. The school's information, supported by work in pupils' books, indicates that the progress in English and mathematics of pupils eligible for additional funding is as good as, and sometimes better than, that of their peers.
- Pupils enjoy reading and their enthusiasm has been boosted by the provision of a wider range of books in their class libraries. Moreover, good teaching has developed pupils' reading skills and helped turn many into better writers too.

**The early years provision** is good

- Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge levels well below those expected for their age, especially in social and emotional development, mathematics and literacy. Good leadership and management have ensured that teaching is consistently good and enables most children to reach standards in line with national expectations, and in many cases above, by the end of Reception.
- Children benefit from a range of well-planned activities, some led by the teacher and some they choose themselves, that stimulate their curiosity and sustain their interest. As a result, most children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs, and those who are disadvantaged, make good progress. The most able children also do well. In one lesson, a group of children honed their artistic skills by drawing intricate henna *mehndi* designs on a hand. This activity was first modelled effectively by the teacher, who made stimulating reference to Bollywood dancing.
- Children's attainment rose in 2014, including in mathematics and literacy, and the school's figures are supported by evidence from children's work during the previous year. Improvements to the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) have helped pupils make good progress in reading from their starting points.
- Children's physical development is good because of the good range of provision in the outdoor environment. Relationships with adults are strong and this supports children's good personal, social and emotional development. Questioning is used well by teachers and classroom assistants to extend children's learning, while regular, careful observations of how well children are doing inform teachers' planning.
- Sound steps have been taken to involve parents with their children's learning but there is still more work to be done in this area.

## 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> | 134008  |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Bromley |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 449045  |

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> | 203                           |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body            |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Mary Cooke                    |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Lynda Doel                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 29–30 November 2012           |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01689 819955                  |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01689 600830                  |
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