

Hillcrest Primary School

Cemetery Road, Bristol, BS4 3DE

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leaders have not been wholly successful in bringing about the necessary improvements since the previous inspection quickly enough.
- The governing body has not challenged leaders about the school's performance sufficiently robustly. Leaders' views on the school's overall effectiveness have been too generous in some regards.
- Leaders at all levels have not consistently evaluated aspects of the school's effectiveness with enough rigour and precision. Consequently, plans to secure improvement are not always sufficiently sharply focused.
- Not all subjects in the curriculum are covered in enough detail. There are too few opportunities to apply writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Pupils are not always fully engaged in their learning. As a result, a minority loses concentration and engages in low-level disruption.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high enough. Teachers do not consistently plan lessons which give pupils sufficient challenge, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Marking does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.
- Not enough pupils make the consistently good progress needed in all subjects to enable them to reach the higher standards of which they are capable. This includes those supported by additional funding.
- The early years provision requires improvement because not all the children are sufficiently stretched in order to reach their full potential. In addition, not all areas of learning are covered in enough depth.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are kept safe at the school.
- Teaching assistants' contributions in lessons ensure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the progress that is expected of them.
- The school makes effective provision for the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Pupils across the school enjoy reading.
- Most pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. The majority of pupils conduct themselves well around the school site, including at lunchtime and playtime.
- Additional funding for physical education has improved pupils' participation rates in clubs and in competitive sport.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons and carried out a learning walk. Of these observations, two were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and analysed information about pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, heard some of them read, and talked informally to pupils around school and during playtime and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including plans for the new curriculum, records relating to behaviour and attendance, records of pupils' learning and progress, those relating to the quality of teaching, and documents which show how the school works to keep pupils safe.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The inspectors took account of 79 responses to the online Parent View survey, six staff questionnaires and a letter received from a parent or carer.

Inspection team

Kerry Rochester, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Faye Bertham	Additional Inspector
Laurie Lewin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The early years is made up of two full-time Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the progress made by all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and the most able, by ensuring that:
 - pupils develop their key skills across all subject areas, particularly in mathematics and writing
 - tasks are planned at the correct level for the differing needs of all groups of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, including the early years, so that it is typically good, by:
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve so that more reach their potential
 - making learning consistently stimulating so that pupils do not lose concentration in lessons
 - using questioning more effectively in lessons in order to check pupils' understanding and, where necessary, move their learning on more quickly
 - ensuring that marking gives pupils clear advice about how to improve their work.
- Increase the impact of leadership on accelerating school improvement by ensuring that:
 - all aspects of the new National Curriculum and the early years curriculum are covered in sufficient detail
 - leaders' management of teachers' performance is used more effectively to raise expectations and standards
 - teachers' assessments of how well pupils are achieving across the school, including the early years, are consistently accurate
 - leaders at all levels and the governing body are able to evaluate the school's effectiveness with greater rigour and accuracy
 - leaders develop more sharply focused plans to tackle key issues for improvement.

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

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 leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because not all of the necessary improvements identified at the previous inspection have been made quickly or extensively enough.
- Leaders' views on the school's overall effectiveness have, at times, been over generous. Self-evaluation undertaken by leaders at all levels identifies the right priorities, but is not always sufficiently detailed. Consequently, plans to tackle weaknesses, although clear and well conceived in outline, are not always defined sharply enough to bring about rapid improvement.
- Evidence seen in books indicates that teachers' assessments are, occasionally, inaccurate. Checks carried out by middle leaders have not had a full impact in bringing about required improvements in teaching and increasing the rate of pupils' progress.
- Leaders have not checked closely enough that pupil premium funding is providing the support for disadvantaged pupils that will make the rapid improvement to their achievement that they need. Despite the school's clear commitment to equal opportunities, the gaps in achievement of this group compared with others in the school and other pupils nationally are not closing quickly enough in mathematics.
- Systems to manage the performance of teachers are securely in place. Leaders' judgements on teachers' performance are now linked to nationally accepted standards. However, teachers have not been challenged enough to raise their expectations about how well pupils should achieve.
- The school is not yet teaching the full requirements of the new National Curriculum. Pupils are receiving too few in-depth opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills across a range of subjects. Opportunities for pupils to apply writing and mathematical skills to other subjects are limited.
- School assemblies make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, but inconsistency in the delivery of the curriculum contributes to patchy coverage of pupils' cultural development. The school's values and beliefs help foster good relationships, tolerance and respect, and ensure that pupils learn without fear of discrimination. They are adequately prepared for life in modern Britain.
- School leaders make sure that the school is a safe and secure environment for its pupils.
- Local authority support has not been wholly effective in helping the school to improve rapidly in areas necessary since the previous inspection.
- Additional funding for primary sport has been used well to provide more physical activities at lunchtime. This is increasing the range of sports activities available during lunchtime as well as in the after-school clubs; more pupils participate as a result. Pupils also enjoy taking part in more inter-school sports competitions.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has participated in external reviews of its work and undertaken significant recent training. The governors have conducted an audit of skills, and new governors have been appointed. Governors are making more frequent visits to the school to find out at first hand the extent to which the standard of teaching is reflected in pupils' learning. As a result, they are becoming more confident in asking challenging questions around improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They compare school results with schools nationally to monitor the school's performance. However, the governors have too readily accepted the headteacher's optimistic views. As a result, they have not challenged leaders with sufficient rigour, or ensured that the rates of pupils' progress improve.
 - The governors are involved in setting targets relating to the headteacher's performance management, and know how salary progression should be linked to improvements in pupils' achievement.
 - Governors have successfully made sure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Consequently, all pupils are kept safe and feel safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Where lessons lack sufficient challenge, a minority of pupils do not show positive attitudes towards their learning. They occasionally lose concentration and a few become involved in low-level disruption.
- A new behaviour system has been implemented which pupils understand and talk about confidently. There is evidence of improving behaviour on the playground and at lunchtimes.

- Most pupils conduct themselves well around the school, in assemblies and in the playground. Pupils show consideration for one another and are well supported by 'buddies' who act as good role models to the younger pupils.
- Attendance over time has been at least in line with national averages.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to the online survey felt that pupils behave well in the school. Inspectors do not endorse that view, as behaviour in lessons is not consistently good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are aware of how they can keep themselves safe, both in and out of school and in different situations, including when online or using computers.
- The tracking of pupils' behaviour and school incident logs indicate that there are few incidents of bullying. Pupils spoken to also share this opinion and were confident that when bullying did occur the staff dealt with it swiftly and appropriately.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- The school meets all the safeguarding requirements.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Evidence in pupils' books and work seen in lessons indicate that teaching is not consistently effective in raising standards. Teachers do not routinely check pupils' work carefully enough. This means that misconceptions are not always identified or tackled quickly enough, especially in mathematics. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise and apply their mathematical skills in different subjects.
- Teachers' use of questioning to check pupils' understanding or to move pupils on to more challenging activities is inconsistent. In some cases, pupils are given too much time to complete simple tasks. This hinders their progress, especially that of the most able pupils in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning and achievement are not always high enough, including for disadvantaged pupils and the more able. Teachers do not routinely make the best use of information about what pupils have already achieved to plan work accurately to meet the needs of all groups of pupils.
- Relationships between pupils and staff are mostly positive and productive. Where learning is most effective, pupils are able to undertake research tasks with proficiency, using a range of different resources. During the inspection, pupils were observed expressing their views on aspects of their learning with confidence.
- The school has clear strengths in the teaching of reading. Pupils enjoy reading and use their skills well across all aspects of their learning. Older pupils benefit from the encouragement they receive from their teachers to read a wide range of literature and to try different authors.
- Marking is not consistently effective in guiding pupils about how to improve their work. As a result, pupils do not always know what they need to do to progress well towards meeting their targets. There are strengths in marking in some classes.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Not enough pupils, including those currently on roll, are making consistently good progress in the full range of subjects.
- Progress in mathematics is too variable, both over time and for current pupils. Work is sometimes pitched too low and, in some of the lessons visited by inspectors, pupils were being asked to complete tasks that were too easy for them.
- Progress in writing for current pupils is not improving rapidly enough in all cases. Work seen in pupils' books and in lessons indicates fluctuations in rates of progress across different classes. Pupils are given too few opportunities to write at length or apply their writing skills across a range of subjects.
- Attainment in Year 6 is at least in line with national averages in all subjects. However, in mathematics, given that in Year 6, in 2014, pupils began Key Stage 2 with above average prior attainment, the standards reached did not represent good progress.
- The gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils in the school, and that of all pupils nationally, have fluctuated since the previous inspection. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was below that of other pupils nationally. They were nearly three and a

half terms behind in mathematics, nearly one and a half terms behind in reading and one term behind in writing. This group was also behind when compared to their peers in school. They were over three terms behind in mathematics, nearly three terms behind in reading and just over two terms behind in writing. Current school information indicates that gaps are beginning to close in some year groups, but not fast enough. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers in reading.

- Work is not always pitched at a suitable level to help the most able pupils to achieve well in writing and mathematics. This is because the work they are set is too easy and does not help them build upon what they have already achieved. Attainment for this group is broadly in line with national averages overall. However, too few of the most able girls attained a Level 5 in mathematics in the 2014 national tests.
- The results of the Year 1 national screening check in phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) are above those seen in most other schools. Pupils apply their phonics knowledge in their reading well, and pupils across the school enjoy reading, so that pupils make at least the progress expected of them.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and, as a result, also progress in line with their peers.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because leaders do not ensure all children achieve consistently well in all areas of learning.
- During the inspection, teachers' records of assessment information were, in some instances, not in line with children's performance as seen by inspectors in their various activities. Planning does not ensure consistently that all areas of learning are fully covered or that work is always challenging enough.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills typical for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development in 2014 was above the national figure, preparing the children adequately for Year 1.
- Early years staff and children get on well together. Leaders ensure that children are well looked after and feel happy and safe at school. The classroom environment is bright and attractive.
- Children enjoy the opportunities to vary their activities, working productively both indoors and outdoors. They are well behaved, showing that they are able to play and work well together.

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

Unique reference number	131522
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	453745

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ed Plowden
Headteacher	Tim Browse
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 February 2013
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