

Boxmoor Primary School

Cowper Road, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1PF

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Improved leadership is the key factor in the school's rising performance. The headteacher has raised morale and transformed the school's performance through her positive approach to staff. She has a clear idea of where the school is heading and staff are right behind her drive to improve teaching and the pupils' achievement.
- The continual focus on improving teaching is successfully improving teacher practice. Teaching is rigorously monitored, with programmes of support in place to improve performance where it is most needed.
- There is much high quality teaching that challenges the pupils to think, be imaginative and have the confidence to explore their own ideas.
- The local authority has played an important part in partnership with school leaders and governors in supporting driving through improvements.
- Governors use their understanding of the school's assessment data to analyse its performance and question leaders in detail about how achievement can be improved.
- Teaching in the early years is leading to the children making good progress. Classrooms inside and out have a wide range of imaginative and well-resourced activities that attract children and stimulate their imaginations.
- The pupils' behaviour is good. They play and work happily together. They are polite, kind and considerate at all times.
- Pupils are keen to learn new skills and ideas. They work hard, enjoy discussing ideas, readily answer questions and take great pride in their work.
- Pupils feel very safe in school as they know staff see their welfare as of paramount importance.
- The school's values underpin its teaching of key British values while also promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are encouraged to be full partners in their children's education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers have consistently high enough expectations of the pupils. As a result, they do not always use methods that make pupils think and the work they set can be too easy.
- The most-able pupils do not always make rapid progress in their writing because they are not expected to write in sufficient depth across a range of styles or for different audiences. In some year groups, opportunities for pupils to practise their writing in other subjects are limited.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, two of which were visited with the headteacher, and looked at work in pupils' books from the current academic year.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, and the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 87 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. They also met informally with a small number of parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 28 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stewart Caplen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-size primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for funding through the pupil premium is well-below average. This is additional government funding which, in this school, supports pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is low.
- The Nursery caters for 25 children on a part-time basis. Children attend the Reception class full time.
- The school has experienced considerable changes of staff since its last inspection, including at senior leadership level. The headteacher was appointed permanently from April 2014, having led the school on a part-time basis since the previous November. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2013.
- The governing body has also experienced considerable changes of membership since the school's last inspection. The Chair of the Governing Body took up the post in April 2015 following a period from September 2014 when the governing body was led on a temporary basis.
- The school hosts privately run breakfast and after-school clubs. These are inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers have consistently high expectations of the pupils, use methods that challenge them and set work that is hard enough.
- Increase the progress of the most-able pupils in writing by ensuring that they write in depth in a wide range of styles for different audiences and practise their skills across subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the pupils and recognises they should have been doing better in the past. She has brought much greater rigour to all aspects of the school's work. This has led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and pupil achievement, with a vital contribution played by effective and well-trained leaders for English, mathematics and the early years.
- Teachers' salary progression is linked closely to pupils making good progress in their classes. Some variability in teaching remains as not all shortcomings were spotted and tackled swiftly enough. These are now being eliminated by sharply focused guidance and training.
- The ethos is one where high expectations of behaviour are underpinned by the school's core values. The recent clarification of the behaviour policy has brought great consistency to the way staff follow procedures. This means pupils know exactly where they stand and the school is calm and harmonious.
- Instrumental in the school's continuing improvement since the last inspection is its effective engagement with the local authority, particularly supporting the headteacher on her appointment. Training for subject leaders and consultant guidance has also aided the drive to improve teaching in English and mathematics.
- The school effectively promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination. Resources funded by the pupil premium are targeted to each individual's identified need and their impact is closely monitored. This enables support to be adapted quickly so that it can have the maximum benefit on eligible pupils' progress.
- The strong partnership with parents starts in the Nursery and is built upon across the rest of the school. The 'Parent Forum' is a valuable sounding-board for leaders and governors. It regularly surveys parents and act upon their views.
- The curriculum is thoughtfully planned with a clear focus on English and mathematics while topic themes have been adapted to meet national curriculum changes. Every opportunity is taken to make learning interesting through special events, educational visits and lessons outdoors in the Forest School.
- The school uses additional sports funding well to increase pupil participation and provide a wider range of sports for pupils to experience, such as snowboarding and rock climbing. This is having a positive impact on pupils' fitness.
- Pupils learn about their place in modern Britain by the staff continually emphasising the school's values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance of others. Pupils learn about the major world religions, celebrate their festivals and visit places of worship. Workshops, such as Samba drumming, broaden their understanding of the world.
- Safeguarding arrangements are secure and rigorously implemented. Staff are trained well in procedures and are vigilant in spotting concerns. They continually assess, and do their utmost to eliminate, risks to the pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The much-changed governing body is now under strong and experienced leadership. Governors support the headteacher's ambitions and continually challenge leaders to improve pupil performance. Their sharp understanding of assessment data enables them to ask incisive questions and check the impact of spending decisions, such as the pupil premium. This has led to the priority this year to ensure that eligible pupils make swifter progress so that more reach higher levels.
 - Governors know teaching is good and improving, and aware how this is being achieved. They are rigorous in ensuring that the headteacher uses salary awards to reward only good and better teaching.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents strongly agree. Pupils are friendly, exceptionally polite and very considerate towards adults and each other. Mutual respect is strongly visible between pupils and between pupils and staff. Examples of inappropriate behaviour are rare because pupils understand the consequences of their actions and do not want to risk sanctions.
- Pupils take their responsibilities with great pride. This includes acting as representatives on the school council, organising sports competitions in school or when Year 6 pupils 'buddy' Reception children to help them settle into school.
- Pupils work hard whether by themselves, in pairs or in small groups. They readily share and discuss ideas that help them to learn. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers, and answer their questions clearly and thoughtfully. Pupils can become bored and lose concentration when work is too easy and teaching does not capture their imaginations. This slows their learning.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and their parents agree. Pupils are taught how to look after themselves, particularly how to recognise and deal with dangers posed by the unguarded use of the internet.
- School records confirm the views of pupils and their parents that bullying is very rare and incidents are dealt with swiftly. Pupils understand the differing forms bullying can take, including the use of derogatory language, and that this is simply not tolerated by themselves or staff.
- Attendance is monitored closely so that any concerns are identified and dealt with swiftly. As a result, attendance is above average and continuing to rise.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well so that learning flows undisturbed. Much teaching is interesting and keeps pupils fully focused on their work. Methods adopted, including the creative use of resources, stimulate the pupils' imaginations and retain their attention for long periods. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' responses in order to gauge their understanding and then adapt their subsequent teaching.
- Much teaching in Years 5 and 6 is of a high quality. Expectations of what the pupils can achieve are very high in these classes. Methods used, work set and questions asked make the pupils think hard and push their learning forward rapidly. Pupils are continually encouraged to try out their ideas and to be confident to learn by their mistakes.
- Teaching assistants make a considerable contribution to the pupils' good learning. They are deployed well in lessons and know precisely what they should be doing. They also lead programmes of support for individuals or small groups that are well based on a clear understanding of the pupils' specific needs.
- Pupils receive very clear feedback from teachers on how well they are doing and where improvements are needed. They regularly respond to their teacher's comments by correcting mistakes or extending a piece of work further. This supports their learning well.
- The effectiveness of the teaching of reading has improved as improved strategies to teach phonics (the sounds that letters make) in the lower year groups is providing a secure foundation to build on.
- Mathematics teaching has adapted well to the challenges presented by the new national curriculum. Teachers make sure that pupils not only master new skills but also deepen their understanding through their application to complex problems. By contrast, teachers do not always stretch the most-able pupils

enough in their writing. They do not always give enough opportunity for pupils to write in sufficient depth, for different audiences and in a wide range of styles, or to practise their writing enough in other subjects.

- On a small number of occasions where teaching is less effective, expectations are not high enough. Methods adopted are not challenging enough to move learning forward rapidly and the work set is too easy. This slows learning for all pupils.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They make rapid progress in Years 5 and 6, but progress is not as consistently as high in other year groups. The impact of a slight legacy of staffing instability on the pupils' achievement is being rapidly eliminated.
- Year 6 test results were much higher than the national average in 2014 in all subjects. The trend is upwards over the last five years. Almost all pupils reached Level 4 in mathematics, reading and writing and significant numbers exceeded this. They were well prepared for secondary school.
- Children make good and improving progress in the early years in all areas of their learning. Their attainment is well above average and rising rapidly. This gives them a very firm foundation from which to meet the challenges of Key Stage 1.
- Results of the phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils were average in 2014. However, training for staff and alterations to planning have led to more rapid progress and more Year 1 pupils already demonstrate secure skills than previously.
- The pupil premium is used well to ensure that the small number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group make equally as good progress as others. As a result, attainment gaps between these pupils and others either in their classes or nationally are closing rapidly. The gap with others in the class in 2014 was nearly five terms behind in mathematics, one term behind in writing and virtually non-existent in reading. This group exceeded other pupils nationally in reading and writing but lagged behind them by six months in mathematics.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similarly good progress as others. This is because the school focuses resources sharply on individual needs and adapts programmes of support quickly if evaluation shows they are not having sufficient impact.
- The most-able pupils make good progress, although not as consistently so in writing as in reading and mathematics. All pupils who reached Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 in each subject reached Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014. In addition, the majority of these pupils reached Level 6 in mathematics, but none did so in either reading or writing. Currently, no pupils are writing at this high level in Year 6.

The early years provision is good

- The achievement of children in the early years is good because teaching is good, albeit with some variability. Staff have a strong understanding of how children learn and use this to provide activities which are planned well to move learning forward for all children. Staff give children confidence through their regular praise. They question children and discuss their learning skilfully, suggesting ideas to them. Children listen carefully and try to take on board what is being suggested.
- Children show how happy and safe they feel in both the Nursery and Reception classes by the way they arrive happily at the start of the day and settle to their work. Staff take care to ensure that classrooms and outside areas are safe and secure.
- Children behave well because they understand clearly what is expected of them whether this is when working on activities themselves or in a session led by an adult. They decide what resources they might

need and how they can be used to explore ideas. They work collaboratively and concentrate for long periods on tasks.

- There is strong and effective leadership of the early years. Regular monitoring enables action to be taken where needed and its impact checked. The clear focus on continually trying to improve teaching has led to a considerable increase in its impact on the children's learning and a considerable rise in their attainment. Staff have established strong and supportive relationships with parents who greatly value and enjoy being able to stay in both classes at the start of the day to work with their children.

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	117107
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	462089

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Eardley
Headteacher	Victoria Evans
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2013
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