

Brindley Heath Junior School

Enville Road, Kinver, Stourbridge, DY7 6AA

Inspection dates 10–11 June 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 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved a great deal since the last inspection because of the determined and effective leadership of the headteacher. It continues to improve.
- Good senior leadership has led to improved teaching which, in turn, has led to consistently good progress in all year groups.
- Teaching is good. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are usually high. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They support individual pupils and groups well.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently above average in reading and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The exciting and well-planned curriculum motivates pupils and makes them keen to learn.
- Attendance is consistently above average.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Parents are very pleased with the progress their children make, and the way in which they are looked after by the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their behaviour and conduct around the school are impressively mature.
- Governors work diligently and make a good contribution to the leadership of the school. They hold the headteacher to account for the performance of the school. They have a firm grasp of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. They have many opportunities to take on responsibilities, and to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The role of subject leaders is not fully developed. They do not make enough of a contribution to the way the school checks and improves the quality of learning in their subjects.
- Occasionally, teachers set work which is too easy for the most-able pupils. When this happens, their interest in their work wanes and their progress slows.
- Marking does not always inform pupils about how they can improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in parts of 23 lessons, four of which were seen jointly with senior leaders. They looked at pupils' work in several different subjects, including English and mathematics. They listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, parents, subject and senior leaders, class teachers, three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- They gained the views of parents through discussions at the school gates, and through the 56 responses to the online questionnaire for parents, Parent View.
- Inspectors gained the views of staff through various meetings, and from the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- They looked at a range of school records and documents dealing with: the safeguarding of pupils' well-being; the school's self-evaluation; the school's development planning; the monitoring of teaching and learning; governing body meetings; the progress being made by pupils currently at the school, and those who have recently left the school.

Inspection team

Terry McDermott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Wayne Simner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brindley Heath Junior School is approximately the same size as the average-sized primary school.
- Each of the four year groups comprises two classes.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, who are supported through the pupil premium is below average. This funding is for pupils in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the Kinver Primary Federation, along with Foley Infant School.
- The headteacher of Brindley Heath is the executive headteacher of both schools.
- The school operates small before-school and after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further, so that more is outstanding, by ensuring teachers:
 - always set work which consistently challenges the most-able pupils
 - use their marking to give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders by ensuring that they have the skill and the opportunity to make regular checks on the amount and quality of learning that is taking place in their respective subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher, well supported by his skilful deputy, has eradicated any hint of poor teaching by challenging it where it exists. He has provided high quality training to support all teachers but especially those whose performance was weak. Staff have responded well to this good leadership and strengthened what they did well. Their morale is high, because they know how successful they have already been and can see what they need to improve next.
- School self-evaluation is accurate because it is firmly based on leaders' secure analysis of what pupils know. Leaders have ensured that the school's development plan is carefully designed so that it will eliminate identified weaknesses within a manageable and realistic timeframe.
- Leaders have established a strong ethos of good behaviour and learning by all pupils throughout the school, which is leading to rapid improvement. This ethos is built on the principles of fairness, respect and tolerance and has a strong impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils and adults are well aware that no form of discrimination will be tolerated, and that all pupils will have the same good opportunities to achieve well and succeed.
- The school works well with the community it serves. Parents are very supportive of the school and its work. Those who responded to the online questionnaire were unanimous that the school looked after their children well and kept them safe.
- Systems for safeguarding children's well being are effective and meet all of the latest requirements. Policies and procedures are crisply written and implemented consistently by all staff. Staff training is up to date. Staff and visitors are properly vetted. Access to the school is well controlled.
- The curriculum is well designed. It has the necessary breadth and balance to sustain the interest of all pupils. The school has introduced a number of imaginative developments, such as the 'POP-stars' (Paragraphs of Perfection) programme. This has markedly raised the profile of writing throughout the school. A well-planned series of assemblies, visits, and themed lessons underpin the school's key message that pupils should always behave with kindness and respect for each other. The school expects that pupils will take responsibility for their own actions. Pupils are well aware of British values and institutions, such as the rule of law, and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school sports funding is used well. Many pupils participate in sport or physical activity, both within and after school. The school has used this funding very effectively to appoint specialist physical education teachers, who share lessons with the school's staff to help to improve their teaching skills.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils and employ these extra resources to ensure that these pupils are able to play a full and active part in the life of the school. As a result, gaps in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics between these pupils and their classmates, are closing steadily.
- In the past, the local authority had little impact on the school's work. However, since September 2014, the headteacher has worked closely with an adviser, who offers realistic challenge and pertinent guidance.
- Senior leaders' systematic checks on pupils' progress ensure that all pupils achieve well, irrespective of gender, race, disadvantage or disability. The school has a wealth of reliable information which senior leaders analyse in detail to identify individual pupils who may need extra help. Leaders arrange dedicated, skilful and often individual support to help these pupils catch up. However, subject leaders do not yet make an effective contribution to checking the amount of learning going on in lessons in their subjects throughout the school, because they do not have either the expertise or opportunity, so to do.

■ The governance of the school:

- Members of the governing body bring a wide range of knowledge and a high level of understanding to their role. Governors work very effectively alongside the leadership team to evaluate the impact of any actions the school takes. They check regularly on the impact of the additional funding used to support disadvantaged pupils. They meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss internal and externally produced data relating to pupils' performance. They understand how to analyse and evaluate data about pupils' achievement and compare it to the performance of other schools.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching and know how this affects pupils' progress. They ensure that decisions about pay and promotion are dependent on teachers' performance. They ensure that teachers and other staff have access to good training so that they can develop the skills they need to teach well.
- Governors oversee the running of small before-school and after-school clubs effectively. They ensure that these clubs give children valuable opportunities to get their day off to a healthy start, to complete homework, or simply to be safe and well looked after.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive, and they try hard when work challenges them to think things through for themselves. Pupils consistently follow the school's rules for behaviour because they say they can see the sense in them by thinking 'What if it was me in that position?'
- The standard of presentation of pupils' work is good. Their handwriting is consistently neat and their work is impressively well laid out. Their extended writing in topic books and literacy books contains very few scribbling or crossings out.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and this is borne out by their consistently very good levels of attendance.
- The school is a very calm place. Pupils conduct themselves very well. They are unfailingly well mannered, polite and friendly. Behaviour in assemblies and in the dining room at lunchtime is exemplary.
- Sometimes, the work set by teachers is too easy. When this happens, the concentration of the most-able pupils slips, and they complete their work too casually, without giving it real thought.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Access to the school site is tightly controlled. Visitors are welcomed but they are checked rigorously to ensure pupils' safety. Staff training is updated regularly and adults are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have with the appropriate leaders.
- The very good relationships between adults and pupils, and among pupils themselves, mean that pupils are confident when speaking to adults about any issues they might have. They know their views will be taken seriously and considered sensitively.
- Pupils say they feel safe. Those parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire unanimously agree. Pupils know the risks associated with use of the internet, much as they do for issues relating to road safety and substance abuse.
- Pupils know what constitutes bullying. They say it is rare in school, because 'we always try to put ourselves in the other person's shoes'. They are confident that if it did occur, the school would deal with it rapidly and firmly.
- Inspectors found no evidence of racist, cyber or homophobic bullying. The school works relentlessly to ensure that all forms of oppression or discrimination are always addressed. This results in a calm and trusting learning environment where pupils are able to thrive.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard at the tasks they are set, which are usually challenging. They have good subject knowledge, which they use well to link learning in different subjects together. For instance, in one lesson in Year 6, teachers provided pupils with computers so that they could explore the history of the British monarchy. Pupils were able to use their knowledge of scientific enquiry to separate facts known about Queen Victoria from conjecture about Henry VIII.
- Teacher consistently expect and trust pupils to work without direct supervision. This is possible because of the uniformly good relationships between adults and pupils.
- Teachers routinely encourage pupils to develop the ability to share their views and opinions and help them to do so in a clear and concise manner. This deepens pupils' understanding by bringing different perspectives on the same event together. Teaching generally consolidates pupils' above average starting points when they join Year 3 well, and this leads to above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6. However, the work they set for the most-able pupils is not always sufficiently challenging to ensure they make the really rapid progress some are capable of.
- The teaching of reading throughout the school is good. Pupils of different abilities in Year 3 and Year 4 say they enjoy reading 'because of all the books we can borrow'. Teachers encourage older pupils to read for pleasure at home, and pupils read regularly at school during guided reading lessons.
- The teaching of writing has improved rapidly over the past year. Teachers have very high expectations that pupils will present work neatly, with correct spelling and good use of grammar. They set interesting scenarios for pupils to write about, usually based on pupils' direct personal experience, which motivate pupils well. Pupils compete to complete extended pieces of high quality persuasive or emotive text.
- The teaching of mathematics is strong throughout the school. Teachers, particularly in Year 6, routinely expect pupils to use their powers of reasoning and to apply their prior knowledge to new situations. This was seen to very good effect when pupils were asked to translate ratios into graphical representations on pie charts, and to be accurate to within one degree. Pupils gained a deep understanding of the mathematical principles and processes involved and applied them logically and very accurately.
- Teaching assistants usually contribute well to pupils' good achievement, especially when they ask pupils to explain their thoughts by asking 'why?'
- The marking of pupils' work is detailed, often extensive, regular and celebratory. However, it does not often enough guide pupils towards what to do next to improve, nor extend their learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014, the attainment of Year 6 pupils was above the national average in reading and mathematics, and broadly average in writing. The school's own assessments indicate that current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach standards in writing that are much higher than last year, and standards in reading and mathematics that are at least as high.
- The proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 in 2014 was above the national average. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress compared favourably with national averages in mathematics, but was below the national average in reading, and particularly in writing. School data suggests that, throughout the school, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are making the most rapid progress in Year 6, which is equally good in all three subjects.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress and achieve well. The school supports them well with work and skilful teaching which is closely matched to their needs.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in Year 6. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests (Levels 5 or 6) in 2014 was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, a small number of pupils, who entered the school with Level 3, were unable to sustain their earlier achievement to reach Level 5 or Level 6 by the time they left. This was largely because work set in Years 3, 4 and 5 was not always challenging enough.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was about two terms behind their classmates in reading and mathematics, and about three terms behind in writing. When compared to other pupils nationally, they were about one term behind in reading and mathematics, and two terms behind in writing. Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school and nationally have been closing steadily over the past three years. This is because the school has allocated resources specifically to support these pupils, so that that they can make accelerated progress. School data for pupils currently on roll suggests clearly that this trend is continuing. Work seen by inspectors in pupils' books confirms this.

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

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Unique reference number | 124094 |
| Local authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 462598 |

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

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|--|------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 211 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Ian Rumble |
| Headteacher | Jason Willetts |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 September 2013 |
| Telephone number | 01384 872343 |
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