

Brownhills West Primary School

Shannon Drive, Brownhills, Walsall, WS8 7LA

Inspection dates

30 June–1 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 at all levels, including governors, have not ensured that pupils have made consistently good progress since the school was last inspected. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 fell to below average in 2014, especially in mathematics.
- Middle leaders do not always check to see what difference their actions are making in improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors do not receive information about the progress of the most-able pupils.
Teachers do not always check on the progress of some groups during lessons or adjust the tasks where pupils find work too easy or too hard.
- Not all teachers follow the school's marking policy in providing precise guidance to show pupils how to improve their work in other subjects such as science and topic work.
- Some pupils' writing is hampered by weak spelling, grammar and punctuation. Additionally, pupils are in the early stages of knowing how to draft and edit their writing in order to improve it.
- Pupils do not have enough time to organise their ideas before starting work. Leaders have identified this as a school expectation.
- Not enough children in the early years make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Adults do not always pick up and correct children's language to ensure that it is accurate.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has set a clear direction for the school and has accurately identified areas for improvement. The school's ethos is aspirational with pupils working hard to 'Be Brownhills' Best'.
- The school is improving, with current pupils showing more rapid rates of progress. Some teaching is highly effective.
- Reading programmes are helping to improve pupils' early phonic skills (letters and the sounds they make).
- Attendance has improved and is now average.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and respectful and enjoy taking on additional responsibilities.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust. Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Leaders' strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils readily welcome new pupils to the school and have a good understanding of those from other cultures and with different beliefs.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They saw 15 parts of lessons, six of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and information from surveys collected by the school. They also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- The inspection team took account of letters received from staff and 18 responses to the inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lesson observations, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Brownhills West is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The early years consists of a nursery and one Reception class. Nursery children attend part time and Reception children attend full time.
- The large majority of pupils are White British and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school part-way through their primary education is higher than the national average.
- A breakfast and after-school club are managed by the governing body.
- The current headteacher was appointed in November 2013.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is at least good by:
 - checking the progress of all groups during lessons in order to adjust learning tasks where needed
 - ensuring all teachers follow the marking policy in giving pupils' precise guidance on how to improve their work in subjects other than writing and mathematics
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing by ensuring all teachers:
 - improve pupils' spelling and their use of punctuation and grammar
 - provide pupils with more time to organise their ideas before starting work
 - develop pupils' drafting and editing skills
 - guide children's use of language in the early years.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders to so that they evaluate the impact of actions they introduce in order to further improve the quality of teaching and thereby raise standards
 - providing governors with information about the progress of all groups, especially the most-able pupils, in order to challenge senior leaders more effectively.

An external review of governance, including a review of the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because leaders and governors have not ensured that all teaching has been good over time. As a result, standards fell in 2014 at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There remains some inconsistency across classes and year groups in the progress pupils are making, particularly in writing.
- Not all middle leaders demonstrate sufficient knowledge of their roles and responsibilities in improving standards in their areas. Some have been too slow to identify where improvements are needed. While they have introduced some initiatives to help raise achievement, they do not always check to see which actions are making the greatest difference.
- The headteacher has set a clear and focused direction for the school and created a culture of good behaviour and teaching. Her aspirational vision for the school's ethos, the learning environment and the 'aspire, believe, challenge and dream' (abcd) system is consistently applied throughout the school and leading to significant improvement, particularly in relation to attendance, phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and mathematics. There is good capacity for further improvement.
- The school's evaluation of its own work is accurate. Senior leaders have identified precisely where further development and support is needed in relation to different classes and subjects. They check pupils' work, observe teaching and carefully track the progress pupils are making. However, the most-able pupils are not tracked and therefore leaders and governors are unsure of their progress, including for children in the early years.
- Procedures to manage staff performance are effective. The headteacher identifies and tackles underperformance. There is no longer any inadequate teaching in the school. Staff targets are linked closely to the standards expected of teachers and matched to identified, individual pupils who need to make accelerated progress.
- Leaders make sure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to achieve well. For example, the school buy-in specialist support for children with speech and language difficulties in the early years to ensure that they get off to the best start possible and achieve as well as their classmates. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The curriculum provides pupils' with a wide range of opportunities to develop their artistic, sporting and musical talents as well as their literacy and mathematical skills. A wide range of visits, visitors and after-school clubs, such as street dance, provide memorable and worthwhile experiences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly by leaders. British values are taught regularly through assemblies and lessons. As a result, pupils show high levels of respect and appreciation for others and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- There is a clear focus on pupils' achieving well. 'Being Brownhills' Best', together with the introduction of the University of Brownhills West, encourages pupils to strive for the best outcomes possible. Additionally a visiting mountaineer led an inspirational school assembly during the inspection with a clear message to pupils to be ambitious and resilient throughout their lives. All pupils were engrossed.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support not only pupils' academic development, but also their personal and social development. The family support worker works closely with vulnerable pupils and their families. This has led to improved levels of attendance for some pupils and gains in their learning. However, some funding is used for universal projects or resources for the whole school and there is less evidence of the impact this funding is having directly on those pupils' who are eligible.
- The sports funding is used effectively. Training has been provided for teaching staff and midday supervisors. This has led to increased levels of confidence amongst staff in teaching physical education, particularly in dance and gymnastics, and improved behaviour and engagement in activities at lunchtimes.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school is meticulous in record keeping and ensures that all adults who work with pupils have been checked. All safeguarding policies and procedures have been reviewed. Leaders have created a safe and calm environment for both staff and pupils.
- The local authority agrees that the school currently requires improvement. Good support has been provided and there is an accurate view of how well the school is performing. The local authority rightly has confidence in the headteacher's leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Some governors have recently joined the governing body and some have taken on new roles of responsibility. They have a growing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievement as they receive regular updates from leaders and look at pupils' work. However, they do not know how well some groups are doing, for example the most-able, as this information is not

always provided.

- Governors acknowledge that they did not challenge leaders well enough previously and say they were 'too trusting'. They are beginning to ask more probing questions but are still too dependent on information provided by the headteacher.
- Governors set suitable targets for the headteacher and have a good overview of the performance of teaching staff. They link pupils' progress to the effectiveness of staff and only approve pay awards where there is good evidence that teachers are meeting the targets set.
- Governors know how additional pupil premium and the sport funding are being spent and are beginning to check that this extra funding is making a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Governors have attended training on safer recruitment, use of school data and finance to ensure that their skills are up to date and that they meet their statutory duties.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The 'aspire, believe, challenge, dream' system, where pupils select their preferred starting points and levels of difficulty in tasks is leading to higher levels of independence. Additionally, pupils have greater knowledge of their own abilities and take greater responsibility for moving their learning forward. However, these aspects are still in the early stages of development.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They are polite, courteous and helpful. Playtimes are a happy and social occasion and all equipment is used and shared sensibly. A large number of pupils join the school part-way through but all settle quickly and are made to feel welcome with buddies supporting them.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the behaviour policy and follow it accordingly. They know about the rewards and sanctions in place and can explain the colour coding charts within classrooms which maintain an orderly learning atmosphere.
- Pupils, parents and staff agree that behaviour is good. School records show that there are few incidents but those that occur are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Systems to check on pupils' safety are robust and the required checks on the suitability of staff and others who work in the school are conscientiously made. Staff and governors undertake training to ensure that they know how to deal with cases involving abuse of children if they arise.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe because this is given high importance. Visitors from the fire service and other organisations teach pupils how to stay safe. Pupils understand the potential dangers of using the internet as this is taught well.
- Pupils have a good understanding about the different types of bullying but say this is not an issue in their school. They know who to talk to if they have a problem and those who have recently joined the school say they feel safe because 'teachers listen to you'.
- The breakfast club offers a valuable resource for pupils and parents. Adults provide good levels of support and opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. This adds to pupils' overall personal development and preparation for the school day.
- Attendance has improved and is now average. The school continues to promote and reward good attendance.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- School's own information, observations of learning in lessons and work in pupils' books shows that teaching is variable and pupils' progress over time has not been consistently good. The headteacher has taken action to address underperformance. Training and support for staff has led to improved teaching and earlier identification of pupils who are in danger of falling behind.
- Teachers do not always check on the progress of all groups when they are working with a specific group and are therefore unsure how well pupils' are doing, or whether the work provided is too easy or too hard. For example, in a Year 1 reading lesson, the most-able pupils were reading a short non-fiction book which

was too easy for them. They finished it quickly and had no further work to go on to so time was wasted and their progress was limited.

- Teachers' marking has been a whole-school development area this year and books sampled during the inspection shows that marking has improved. Pupils have dedicated daily 'fix it' time to respond to teachers' comments or correct any errors. However, not all teachers apply the school policy consistently and work in other subjects, such as science and topic work are not marked as thoroughly or effectively as writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are now writing at greater length and the presentation of their work is improving. However, their use of grammar, punctuation and spelling is weak in most classes as teachers do not always focus closely enough on this aspect. Pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, are not encouraged to use their phonic skills to sound out unfamiliar words or check carefully that their sentences make sense.
- The writing process has been reviewed by the literacy coordinator this year and shared with staff. Opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas or draft and then edit their work to improve the quality are still in the early stages. For example, pupils in a Year 3 lesson were writing balanced arguments about whether testing was a good thing or not. Almost all pupils struggled with the activity as they had not been given enough time to organise their ideas before starting the task..
- In the main, reading is taught well. Pupils are now making better rates of progress, especially those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs. The pupil premium funding has been used to purchase a phonics programme which pupils use on I-pads or computers. Levels of engagement are high with a good success rate as it is set at the right level for each individual.
- Improvements in the teaching of mathematics have led to increased rates of progress. Additional training and a greater focus on pupils applying and using their skills have resulted in accelerated rates of progress. Exciting problem-solving and real-life activities are now regular features within lessons. For example, in learning about ratio, pupils in Year 4 made fruit cocktails in order to work out what proportion of fruit juice was needed to lemonade.
- Support staff work in close partnership with class teachers and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. They support small groups within lessons and also work with individuals during the afternoon.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because their progress has not been consistently good since the previous inspection and remains uneven across the school. In 2014, standards fell to below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics. The proportions reaching the levels required in grammar, punctuation and spelling were also below average. Current data show that writing levels remain below average in Key Stage 2 and too few pupils make good progress in this subject.
- School's own information shows that attainment is rising and progress rates are accelerating. Teachers' assessments in Year 2 for 2015 show that standards have recovered and are set to be broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. From their entry points, pupils have made good progress in reading and mathematics but very few have made good progress in writing.
- School's own predictions for the end of Year 6 in 2015 show that if achieved, attainment will be above average in reading, average in mathematics but below average in writing. Pupils in current Year 6 have made good progress in all areas in the last year due to good teaching.
- The teaching of phonics has improved. As a result, the number of pupils reaching the level required in the Year 1 phonic screening check has recovered and is now average, having dropped to well below average in 2014.
- Pupils who join the school late make steady progress from their starting points in line with their classmates.
- The most-able pupils make expected progress as they move through the school. School's own information shows a rise in the number of pupils reaching the higher levels both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2015 due to the levels of challenge they are now being given through the 'abcd' system.
- In 2014, there were wide gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared with others in the school and nationally. Disadvantaged pupils were over five terms behind others in their class in reading and writing and over four terms behind in mathematics. Compared to pupils' nationally, they were almost six terms behind in writing and mathematics and almost five terms behind in reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils who left Year 6 in 2014 made similar rates of progress to their classmates and their progress therefore requires improvement. Compared to others nationally, these pupils made less progress

in mathematics but similar progress in reading and writing. School's own records show that the pupil premium is now being used more effectively and, as a result, progress rates are accelerating and attainment gaps are beginning to close.

- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs requires improvement along with other groups in the school. Until 2014, their progress was declining and leaders did not act swiftly enough to reverse the trend. Additional support and the use of effective computer programmes, including those for phonics, are showing that pupils are now making at least expected progress.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children join Nursery with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age in several areas, particularly reading, writing and mathematics. Although most make good progress in their personal, social, emotional and physical development, children do not catch up quickly enough in reading, writing and mathematics. Fewer children reached a good level of development in 2014 and 2015 compared to others nationally. Some, therefore, are not prepared well enough for Year 1.
- Teaching is stronger in Reception than in the Nursery. In the main, teachers plan learning well to develop children's basic skills. However, in the Nursery, early reading is taught while other noisy activities are taking place. This restricts the teacher's ability to hear children's individual responses and children are equally unable to hear the teacher clearly. This limits the accuracy of children hearing the exact and precise sounds being taught.
- Early language development is strongly promoted and children are becoming confident talkers. However, in writing, adults do not always pick up and correct errors. For example, children in reception class writing postcards used phrases such as 'I sin a bear'. This was noticed by the classteacher but not addressed or used as a learning opportunity.
- Leaders have created a safe and nurturing environment where children feel safe and are happy. The outdoor area has been improved and is effective in helping develop all areas of learning, but particularly physical development. Overall children behave well. They quickly learn school routines and socialise at playtimes with older children.
- Leadership in the early years is good. The early years' leader ensures that all adults record children's progress systematically and show what progress is being made. This is evident in children's books and the comprehensive assessments made by teachers. The leader has a good overview of where further improvements are needed and works closely with parents to ensure children's needs are fully met.

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	104206
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	456279

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Green
Headteacher	Zoe Bushnell
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2012
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