

Bell Lane Primary School

Bell Lane, Hendon, London NW4 2AS

Inspection dates

7–8 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The headteacher has not ensured that the provision is of a consistently good quality across the school. Pupils, particularly in key stage 2, do not make enough progress from their starting points. Disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress.
- The governing body lacks the capacity to hold school leaders to account for pupils' poor performance. Governors do not routinely challenge the headteacher or check that pupil premium and sports funding is used effectively.
- School leaders have not ensured that teaching across the school is of a consistently good quality. Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low.
- The headteacher has not ensured that pupils new to the school, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, receive appropriate support so that they can make good progress from their starting points.
- The headteacher and governors have not paid sufficient attention to ensuring that the site is secure, well-kept and litter-free at all times.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough and some find it difficult to sustain their concentration in lessons.
- Some parents would like better communication between them and school staff, particularly when they have concerns.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years provision is strong. Children make good progress from their starting points.
- The phonics early reading programme is taught well. Consequently, the proportion of children achieving the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 has improved over time.
- Leaders have introduced a mathematics programme that is beginning to enable pupils to make better progress in this area.
- Staff are committed to ensuring that pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural well-being is developed well.
- The headteacher, leaders and staff, want pupils to feel safe and happy in their learning.
- Pupils are welcoming to new pupils and respect each other's differences. They are proud of their school and kind to each other.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The headteacher and governors must ensure that pupils and children in the early years are kept safe and well by:
 - giving immediate attention to risk assessing access to the school site by parents, carers and members of the public visiting the children’s centre provision
 - reviewing the school environment to make sure that equipment, resources and the school site are hazard-free
 - ensuring that all staff receive regular training on the ‘Prevent’ duty, so that they can be vigilant around identifying any potential issues or risks and understand their statutory duties to keep pupils safe
 - initiating further strategies to encourage pupils to attend regularly and be on time.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - governors receiving accessible and relevant achievement information so that they can challenge and hold the headteacher to account routinely and effectively for any poor performance
 - leaders checking carefully the quality of teaching and learning and holding teachers to account for poor pupil performance, irrespective of when the pupil arrives at the school
 - improving communication with parents and carers, particularly when they raise concerns.
- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders must ensure that all pupils make at least good progress from their starting points, irrespective of their arrival date at the school, by:
 - instigating and developing a comprehensive induction programme for new arrivals and their families that offers appropriate support and guidance
 - undertaking detailed baseline assessments of new arrivals’ cognitive ability, English speaking skills and social and emotional well-being
 - providing effective and regular training to staff on strategies to support pupils who speak English as an additional language or pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities
 - reviewing the intervention programme and in-class support to ensure that it is highly effective in meeting individual pupils’ needs, particularly for those who are disadvantaged, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language
 - raising leaders’ and staff expectations of what pupils can achieve and checking regularly that teaching enables pupils to make at least good progress
 - ensuring that all pupils have excellent attitudes to learning.
- An external review of the school’s use of the pupil premium and sports funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may

be improved.

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

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has not ensured that all pupils and groups of pupils make at least good progress from their starting points, particularly at key stage 2. While the headteacher and her team are able to identify some of the issues preventing pupils from making good progress, they have not tackled them effectively enough.
- The headteacher and other leaders have not instigated an effective induction programme for pupils arriving at the school at times other than the start of a key stage. In particular, they do not offer appropriate support to pupils and their families who are new arrivals to the country and at the early stage of learning English. Baseline assessments of pupils' cognitive ability, English acquisition skills and social and emotional well-being are not robust enough. Staff are not routinely trained to support these pupils effectively. Much relies on individual teachers' interest and skills in this area. As a result, pupils who speak English as an additional language do not always make the progress that they are capable of.
- School leaders check on the quality of teaching across the school. However, they have not created a culture where staff have consistently high expectations for what pupils can achieve, irrespective of whether they have SEN and/or disabilities or speak English as an additional language. Leaders do not routinely hold staff to account for pupils' poor performance.
- Leaders invest heavily in a range of interventions to support pupils' progress. However, they do not check carefully enough that these interventions are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. In particular, they do not ensure that pupil premium funding is spent effectively, so that disadvantaged pupils make the progress that they should from different starting points. This is similarly true of initiatives funded using the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium.
- Leaders have placed a number of pupils on the SEN register when they do not have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or a diagnosed higher level of need. This means that, although there is a weekly inclusion meeting, the school does not have the capacity to meet all of these pupils' needs sufficiently well. High levels of staff support are in place for some pupils. However, the impact of this support is not routinely checked. Consequently, the spending of SEN funding is not consistently having a positive impact on the progress of these pupils.
- Some parents would like better communication between themselves and school leaders. At times, parents say that they have had to escalate issues in order to have their concerns dealt with appropriately. However, others are very happy with the school. As one parent said: 'The school looks after the children and they grow in confidence.' The school provides some parents' groups to encourage them to be involved in their children's learning.
- The local authority have very recently offered further support to school leaders, so that they can enable more pupils to make progress from their starting points. However, this support is in the very early stages and, consequently, it is too soon to see the impact.
- Leaders' vision is that pupils will feel happy and safe at school so that they can learn.

The curriculum encourages pupils to learn about different faiths, cultures and religions. While appropriate time is spent on developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills, leaders ensure that pupils study a range of topics across the curriculum, especially science. Art, sport, Spanish, dance and drama are also encouraged. Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The formal curriculum is enhanced through a range of visits, trips and extra-curricular activities. Leaders embrace pupils' home cultures, while proactively preparing them for life in modern Britain through the citizenship programme. The personal, social and health education programme covers a number of relevant themes and allows pupils opportunities to think about issues such as respecting everyone as equals.

- Leaders encourage teachers to continue with their professional development, through in-house and extra-curricular training sessions. The headteacher has established links with other local primary schools and, together, opportunities are generated for staff to extend their skills and expertise.
- Middle leaders feel valued and supported. They plan carefully, support teachers and provide interesting resources to enable pupils to make better progress.

Governance of the school

- The governing body do not have the capacity to hold the headteacher to account. Governors are not able to analyse performance information provided by the headteacher and ask sufficiently searching questions regarding pupils' progress over time. While they are complimentary about the headteacher's commitment to the school, they have not challenged the decline in progress made by some groups of pupils.
- Governors have not checked that pupil premium, SEN and primary PE and sport premium funding are used sufficiently well.
- Governors were not aware of the issues regarding the public's access to the school or the condition of the environment. Consequently, they were not aware of the potential risks to pupils' well-being and safety.
- However, governors are fully committed to making the necessary changes so that more pupils make the progress they are capable of. In particular, they are determined to tighten site security and undertake the necessary risk assessments. They genuinely have the interests of the pupils at heart and are keen to move the school forward.

Safeguarding

- The headteacher has not ensured that risk assessments on site security are in place and robust so that pupils and children in the early years are kept safe at all times. Current arrangements mean that parents, carers and those visiting the on-site children's centre have open access to the school and its pupils during the day.
- While staff have received training on 'Keeping children safe in education', many have not undertaken training on the 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, some staff are not aware of how they might identify signs of radicalisation or extremism. Plans are in place to

address this.

- Checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school are in place, and records accurately kept. The headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, keeps detailed information on any safeguarding referrals. She works closely with outside agencies to provide early help to families, where necessary.
- Pupils are given a range of advice and guidance on how to keep themselves safe in school and in the wider community. This includes being safe online. Pupils reported during the inspection that they felt safe in school and knew whom to talk to should they have a worry or a concern.
- Arrangements around the administering of first aid and supporting those with EHC plans is strong. Staff are well trained in this area and procedures for recording and reporting incidents to the relevant people are robust.
- Consequently, overall, the arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the key stages is not consistently good. Sometimes, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, especially for the most able and those learning English as an additional language. While many classrooms have a high number of staff, leaders do not check the impact of this support carefully enough.
- There is a whole-school policy on how to give pupils information about how they can improve their work. While teachers follow this consistently, it does not systematically give pupils helpful advice on what they need to do. The 'steps to success' are sometimes instructions, rather than success criteria. Consequently, pupils can easily achieve the 'steps to success' but this does not help them to improve their work. 'Challenge questions' are not routinely attempted and sometimes work is either too easy or too difficult. There are few opportunities for extended writing, particularly in topic work. As a result, not enough pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers and support staff have received very little formal training on how to support those pupils at the early stage of learning English. While there are some dual language books and some staff are skilled at supporting these pupils, this is based on teachers' expertise and interest, rather than a whole-school strategy. As a result, the progress this group makes is ad hoc.
- School leaders have rightly prioritised the teaching of early reading and reading for comprehension and inference across the school. The school uses a synthetic phonics programme, staff have received relevant training and it is taught consistently well across the school. Resources to support this programme are well matched to pupils' needs and there is a whole-school focus on encouraging pupils to read for pleasure. As a result, the vast majority of pupils left Year 1 in 2017, having achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Progress in reading across the school is improving.
- Equally, leaders have introduced a mathematics programme to the curriculum to ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics mastery. Again, teachers are well trained and consistently deliver this programme systematically. This is

beginning to have an impact on pupils' progress in this area.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Many are late for school. The proportion of pupils with unauthorised absence is too high. Attempts by school leaders to tackle this issue have not been effective to date.
- Too little attention is devoted to the upkeep of the building and outside areas. Litter is prevalent. Play equipment and the outside environment is not always conducive to the outdoor curriculum, even though outdoor learning is encouraged, particularly at key stage 1 and in early years.
- Pupils are welcoming and respectful towards new arrivals at the school. They celebrate each other's differences and are keen to make new friends. Pupils were keen to talk to the inspectors and explained that bullying does happen from time to time, but is dealt with quickly and efficiently by their teachers.
- Healthy lifestyles are promoted. Pupils could explain the healthy choices they make when bringing packed lunches to school. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in sport such as basketball, cycling, swimming and dance classes.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Some pupils require regular reminders from staff about how they should behave and how they treat each other. At times, a high number of adults are required to ensure that pupils remain on task during sessions.
- Leaders keep records of any incidents of poor behaviour, which they shared with inspectors. While the number has reduced this year, they still occur on a regular basis.
- In lessons, many pupils work hard and are genuinely interested in their studies. They show pride in their work and were keen to share their achievements with inspectors. Pupils take care over their handwriting and complete work on time. They listen carefully to instructions and work together well.
- Around the school site, the majority of pupils conduct themselves well. They respect school staff and show kindness to younger pupils. They are patient and kind towards those learning English and enjoy being a 'buddy' to new arrivals. This helps those pupils who are new to the school settle in quickly.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, at the end of key stage 2, the progress pupils overall made in reading was well below average, and in writing and mathematics was below average. From different starting points, pupils made less progress than average, particularly in reading but also in mathematics and writing. Disadvantaged pupils made much less progress than pupils

did overall, especially in reading.

- The proportion of pupils overall attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was significantly below the national average. However, a greater percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics than pupils did nationally.
- In 2017, at the end of key stage 1, the percentage achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was just below the national average. More pupils achieved greater depth in reading and mathematics than pupils did nationally.
- In 2017, the vast majority of children in Year 1 met the expected standard in the phonics check. This was as a result of highly structured teaching of synthetic phonics in the early years and key stage 1.
- Current pupils make variable progress across the school. In key stage 1, pupils quickly gain decoding skills as they start to learn to read. They are enthusiastic about their reading and can segment and blend phonic sounds. They use this knowledge as they start to practise their writing. However, at key stage 2, some expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Teachers' baseline assessments of new arrivals are not always robust or timely. Writing activities are often focused on sentence-level work rather than opportunities to concentrate on the quality of extended writing. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- Leaders acknowledge that regular new arrivals at the school mean that teachers have to quickly, and accurately, assess pupils' cognitive, language and social and emotional needs. Leaders track pupils' progress carefully. However, information provided by school leaders indicates that, in many year groups, pupils are not making enough progress to catch up with pupils nationally. Leaders are currently looking to create a more effective system to assess and track the progress pupils make.
- The focus on improving pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills is beginning to have an impact. The taught programmes ensure that all teachers are well trained and that pupils work systematically through the schemes. However, some of these programmes have only recently been introduced, so that the impact is hard to ascertain. New leadership of literacy across the school is beginning to have an impact. A review of the current provision highlighted a number of issues regarding, for instance, the regularity of guided reading. As a result, plans are in place to make this more consistent. Leaders are accurate in their evaluation that more needs to be done in this area.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The headteacher and governors have not ensured that risk assessments around access to the early years area are robust. The outdoor area requires further thought and development. Some equipment and resources are not of a sufficient quality to ensure that children play safely at all times.
- Leadership of the early years provision is strong. Leaders are clear about the strengths of the provision and what could be improved still further. Staff keep careful records of children's starting points and their progress over time across all areas of learning. They work closely with parents, carers and external agencies to ensure that they have an

accurate understanding of each child's particular needs. They carefully record evidence as it arises and intercede quickly should a child's progress stall. As a result, children in the early years make good progress over time. As one parent said: 'We are extremely happy with the development of our daughter, especially how fast she learned to read and write when she was in Reception.' Another commented: 'She can't wait to go to school. Her learning is coming on in leaps and bounds.'

- The teaching of the school's chosen synthetic phonics programme is a strength. Staff follow the programme carefully and children quickly learn the routines and enjoy the activities. Children heard reading during the inspection were able to segment and blend phonemes and explain the story.
- Some teaching assistants support individual children's learning and progress effectively. They know the children well and encourage them to question, play and be curious. Children mix well together, take turns patiently and enjoy playing.
- Staff are well trained in safeguarding and paediatric first aid. They are vigilant in identifying signs of potential abuse and passing on information to the school's designated safeguarding lead. They work closely and effectively with parents and external agencies.
- Provision for the small number of two-year-olds who attend in the afternoon meets children's needs appropriately. Staff know them and their parents well and there is a focus on developing their physical and linguistic skills. For instance, during the inspection, children had been looking at The Owl Babies story and were building a nest using twigs outside for their soft toys.

School details

Unique reference number	101259
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10048530

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Appropriate authority	Governing body
Chair	John Hickman
Headteacher	Elaine Wilson
Telephone number	020 8203 3115
Website	www.belllaneprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	office@belllane.barnetmail.net
Date of previous inspection	7–8 November 2013

Information about this school

- Bell Lane Primary School is a larger-than-average primary school.
- Just over half of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is above average.
- Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is higher than the national average. The largest groups are those who are Black or Black British African, Asian, any other ethnic group, any other White background, Mixed White and Black African.
- Over two thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an EHC

plan is below the national average.

- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment across year groups and subjects. They watched two assemblies and listened to pupils reading. They talked to pupils and children in the early years during lessons and at breaktimes. They spoke to parents at the end of the day.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, governors and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 48 responses to the staff survey, 34 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and 16 responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspection team scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including: records related to pupils' behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings, information on the progress made by pupils, the school's self-evaluation and the school's assessment system. Inspectors also reviewed safeguarding records, policies and procedures, including referrals to external agencies.
- Inspectors, alongside school leaders, scrutinised current pupils' work in Years 2, 4 and 6 and during lessons.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Dawn Titus	Ofsted Inspector
David Bryant	Ofsted Inspector

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