

Bedford Road Primary School

Hillgrounds Road, Kempston, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK42 8QH

Inspection dates

13–14 June 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	Good
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

- Leaders' capacity to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school has been limited. This has contributed towards slowing the pace of improvement to better standards in the school.
- Leaders do not use assessment information from pupils' starting points to rigorously check pupils' progress.
- Some middle leaders are not effective enough. They do not fully understand their responsibilities to routinely check and raise the standard of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Governors have not challenged leaders well enough about pupils' weak progress and attainment.
- Leaders' evaluation of the impact that pupil premium spending has on disadvantaged pupils' achievement is not precise and rigorous. They are not, therefore, able to be sure that it is making a difference.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time has been inconsistent. As a result, pupils do not make good enough progress from their starting points to ensure that they catch up and subsequently attain well.
- Teaching does not ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Teaching does not meet pupils' needs precisely enough, including most-able pupils, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Some teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is not strong. This has an impact on the rate of progress pupils make in mathematics.
- Teachers do not have high expectations about what pupils should achieve in the learning time available.
- Children in the early years do not make sufficient progress in all aspects of their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They have a clear understanding of the actions they need to take and demonstrate the capacity to return the school to good quickly.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check is increasing every year.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders develop middle leaders' roles and responsibilities to raise standards in key stage 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics so that they are at least in line with other pupils' attainment nationally
 - leaders raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school through precise monitoring and training
 - leaders rigorously check and evaluate the funding and support given to disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities so they know that it is effective in helping these pupils make strong progress in all year groups
 - the governing body further improves its effectiveness in fulfilling its core function to hold leaders accountable for the educational performance of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment well to raise staff expectations about what pupils can achieve, including the most able pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those from disadvantaged backgrounds
 - deploying additional staff more effectively to support pupils' precise needs
 - developing teachers' effective use of questioning to deepen pupils' understanding
 - improving teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics
 - raising standards
 - making sure that all teachers use time efficiently to maximise learning opportunities.
- Strengthen the quality of provision in early years by:
 - ensuring that children are better supported to develop their reading, writing and number skills
 - making sure that assessment is precisely focused on progress and it is clear about what children should learn next.
- An external review of pupil premium 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 the school may improve this aspect of its work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher has managed significant staffing turbulence, most notably within leadership, and faced challenges to recruiting staff, while managing the growth of the school as it changes from a lower to a primary setting. Governors and leaders acknowledge that while undertaking this essential work it has reduced the leaders' capacity to ensure that standards in the school have been maintained. The impact of this unsettled time has slowed down the pace of school improvement.
- The support from the local authority has not been effective. It has not been rigorous in its scrutiny and monitoring of the school's work. Local authority advisers have not provided appropriate leadership advice and support during a time when leadership capacity was knowingly reduced.
- Until recently, leaders' capacity to undertake monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment has been limited. Consequently, leaders have not been able to eradicate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, and in pupils' achievement.
- Middle leaders are not raising standards quickly enough in their respective areas. Some leaders lack knowledge and understanding about their roles, and consequently do not take appropriate responsibility and accountability for their wider leadership role within the school. This has contributed towards the reduction in leadership capacity.
- Additional funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is used to provide a wide range of additional support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, leaders' evaluation of the quality and impact of support for these pupils is not rigorous and timely enough for the difference it is making to the achievement of these pupils to be clearly identified.
- Leaders' use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils provides learning support in areas including mathematics and English. Additionally, there are a range of programmes used that successfully meet disadvantaged pupils' personal, social and emotional needs. However, leaders' evaluation of the impact of the spending is not as thorough and precise for their academic achievement and so it is unclear exactly what difference it makes to the progress that disadvantaged pupils make.
- The curriculum covers a wide range of subjects, many of which are taught through topic work using the school's chosen 'stunning starts, marvellous middle and fabulous finish' structure. Coverage of different subjects is thorough and detailed, and the opportunities pupils receive ensure that pupils gain first-hand experiences through a variety of visitors and trips. However, the depth of learning varies across subjects and it is not clear how well pupils achieve in the wider curriculum areas. This is because middle leaders' monitoring is limited and they do not have a rigorous oversight of how well pupils achieve in the areas they lead.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well at Bedford Road. Pupils benefit from learning about a wide range of religions, including, for example, visits to various places of worship during their 'faith tour' and a focused study of 'global learning'. Through the school's monthly focus on the chosen value promoted

every week in assemblies and throughout pupils' day-to-day school life, fundamental British values are explored fully, taking into account the diverse cultural population of the school. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is used effectively to provide training that successfully supports teachers to improve the quality of PE lessons. Many pupils cite PE as one of their favourite subjects. Additionally, pupils have also received increased opportunities to participate in physical activities during lunchtimes and have access to a larger range of resources.
- Leaders work hard to increase parents' involvement and partnership working with the school. Parents spoken with during the inspection, and their responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the text message service, are mostly full of praise for the good communication and improvements that leaders have made. One parent summarised the views of many saying: 'The headteacher and staff are very supportive of all children and parents. They are always approachable and supportive. Children thoroughly enjoy their time at school and look forward to each and every day.'
- Leaders have made sure that staff are well supported and have frequent training opportunities to develop their skills. Furthermore, teachers work with other schools and cluster groups to share and develop good practice. This training and support is valued by staff, as confirmed in the Ofsted staff questionnaire, where an overwhelming majority state that they are proud to be a member of staff at Bedford Road.
- The headteacher, along with the deputy headteacher and governors, accurately identifies the issues and challenges they face. They are ambitious for the school and have an honest and reflective view about where the school needs to be better. They know that the reduction in leadership capacity has slowed school improvement but are beginning to quickly remedy this.

Governance of the school

- Although governors provide challenge and support to leaders about their work regarding pupils' achievement, this has not been sharp or precise enough to ensure that all leaders, particularly middle leaders, are rigorously held to account for their areas of responsibility.
- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school. Scrutiny of governor meeting minutes demonstrates that some governors are becoming more skilled at looking beyond attainment data and interrogating information about the progress made by groups of pupils.
- The governing body monitors safeguarding effectively. It quality assures the steps taken by leaders to ensure that children are safe within the school and has a good knowledge and understanding of what this requires.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders take safeguarding extremely seriously. The family support worker has a detailed understanding of all vulnerable families and works proactively to provide timely and targeted support. Record-keeping is meticulous and leaders demonstrate a

high level of knowledge about all individual safeguarding cases and those pupils being closely checked. Leaders liaise very well with external agencies and are tenacious in following up on concerns and making sure that all actions are thorough and secure pupils' safety.

- Checks carried out on staff before they join the school are thorough. Records of these checks are maintained meticulously by the trust, which ensures that it complies with all legal requirements.
- All staff have been trained to identify signs of any safeguarding issues, including indications of extremism and radicalisation among pupils. Staff are acutely aware of how to act to keep pupils safe. This was confirmed during the inspection when inspectors spoke to a number of staff about their role in safeguarding. The typical response was summarised by one saying: 'We know that we all have a part to play in keeping our children safe.'
- Pupils and parents alike believe that children and pupils are well cared for and safe. One parent encapsulated the common view saying: 'I would recommend this school to other parents who want a safe nurturing environment for their children.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is too variable to be good.
- Teaching does not routinely take enough account of pupils' previous learning to set high expectations about what they should achieve. Tasks do not sufficiently build on what pupils already know and, typically, do not challenge pupils. This is particularly the case with the most able pupils. Activities are not reshaped or adapted to meet pupils' needs, and pupils are not moved on quickly enough from their starting points. When this happens, pupils' progress slows and they do not do as well in their learning.
- Because of this weakness in planning, teachers' questioning does not regularly ensure that pupils' learning is extended. Pupils do not receive routine opportunities to verbalise their understanding, or make links between pieces of knowledge, so that they are well prepared to write formally to the highest standards.
- Too much time is wasted in some lessons. Too often teachers spend too long explaining an activity or getting pupils to clear away, so that pupils don't have sufficient time to practise the new skills they are learning. Teachers are not ensuring that pupils have sufficient time to build on what they have just learned. Consequently, pupils are not being given sufficient opportunity to make the progress that they need to.
- Although now improving, writing standards in the school are variable. Pupils do access opportunities to write in a range of genres and for different purposes. This approach is making a positive difference to pupils' understanding of the different types of writing and to their choice of vocabulary. However, other aspects of pupils' writing are not consistently developed well. For example, pupils continue to repeatedly make the same errors in their spelling. Consequently, improvements in writing are not rapid.
- In mathematics, a newly introduced scheme of work is supporting teachers to plan for pupils to achieve in line with expectations for their age. However, teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics is weaker than in other subjects. Inspection evidence shows

that pupils are provided with limited opportunities to access more complex aspects of mathematics, such as problem-solving and reasoning. Consequently, pupils' progress in mathematics is not consistently strong across all year groups.

- Teaching assistants' support to improve pupils' learning is variable. On some occasions, additional adults simply supervise activities rather than promoting pupils' learning effectively. As a result, some pupils who need to move on quicker to catch up, make slower progress as teaching assistants provide only basic guidance to them.
- The support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is inconsistent because the quality of support is not checked carefully enough to see what difference it is making. Therefore, the progress pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make is too variable across all year groups and it is not always clear enough what their next steps are.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive individualised support for their academic and their personal, social and emotional needs. While their pastoral needs are met well, their academic needs are not being met as securely. Evidence in disadvantaged pupils' books shows that some pupils make good progress. However, this is not the case for the majority and, therefore, the quality of teaching does not ensure that disadvantaged pupils make the progress they are capable of.
- In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, the teaching of phonics takes place routinely and has been improved through staff training and the implementation of a consistent approach to phonics. Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 use their understanding of letters and the sounds they make to work out unfamiliar words. This is supporting pupils in developing their fluency when reading.
- Pupils are positive about reading and enjoy the opportunities they are given to share books with adults and their peers. Teachers are placing more emphasis on raising pupils' comprehension skills and the enjoyment of reading. Pupils are able to talk knowledgeably and enthusiastically about the books they are reading. This was exemplified in Year 5 when a pupil explained that they were reading 'Kensuke's Kingdom' independently again after it being a class text because 'the whole class got lost in it so I wanted to read it myself'.
- Leaders' focus on developing handwriting across the school is working well. Pupils present their writing neatly and take care with the presentation of their work. When inspectors spoke to pupils they were all very keen to share how 'important it is to write neatly and take care with our handwriting'. Pupils are routinely applying this skill in other curriculum areas.
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils and have established clear routines and expectations for behaviour. Pupils settle quickly to learning and the transitions between activities are smooth. Teachers respond enthusiastically to pupils and encourage them to try their best.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff build positive relationships with pupils. This contributes to pupils feeling safe,

happy and well cared for. Where pupils have concerns or worries, they know they can turn to a trusted adult for support. Pupils say that instances of bullying or unkindness are rare. They are confident that any adult in the school would help them should the need arise.

- Leaders invest heavily in ensuring that pupils' personal, emotional and social needs are given high priority. There is effective, successfully implemented pastoral support for all pupils, particularly those who have additional personal, social or emotional needs. Parents value the resources available and commented positively about how well their children are nurtured, saying: 'The school prioritises the children's personal and emotional needs so they can learn well.'
- The school uses a wide range of resources effectively to support pupils, with strategies to improve their confidence and self-esteem, such as the school's chosen 'kaleidoscope' approach. This has resulted in more positive attitudes to learning for the pupils involved.
- Parents are unanimous in their views that their children are happy and well cared for. One parent commented: 'You know children are happy here. They always smile at you.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour across the school is good. Pupils demonstrate increasingly positive attitudes towards their learning, ensuring that with high-quality teaching and learning, they are well placed to make effective progress over time.
- The school works closely with other professionals to provide well-targeted support for the small number of pupils who have particularly challenging behavioural issues. Staff are well supported by leaders to deal quickly and appropriately with incidents of misbehaviour. Exclusions have been carried out as a last resort and appropriate systems and documentation have been adhered to. These actions, and the sensitivity with which they are undertaken, are ensuring that there is minimum disruption to the learning of other pupils.
- Leaders and the family support worker have worked determinedly over time to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence. They follow-up stringently on any absence and work closely with families so that they understand the value of good attendance. Attendance is improving rapidly but is not yet at the national average. There have been particular success and improvement with targeted individuals. Leaders are maintaining their strong focus on this aspect of the school's work.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- From typically low starting points, in key stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average in both 2016 and 2017. Although this was the case, there are sustained improvements in attainment when comparing 2016 and 2017 published outcomes.
- Across the school, the progress that pupils make is too variable in both key stage 1 and

key stage 2. Pupils with low starting points, in particular, are not progressing quickly enough to catch up. Even so, there are examples of some pupils' rising attainment.

- Disadvantaged pupils are not being consistently well supported to make good progress. Despite some evidence of improvement for individual pupils, leaders do not know precisely how well these pupils are doing and whether the differences are being diminished between them and other pupils nationally.
- Pupils are beginning to acquire secure phonics skills in the early years and key stage 1 because the teaching is now more consistently systematic and thorough. This is reflected over time in the Year 1 phonics screening check, whereby the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard has been consistently improving year-on-year and is now nearer the national expectation.
- School information shows that progress for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is improving in cases where the support is most effective. However, there is currently an inconsistent picture across the whole school. Where pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making better progress, the additional funding provides adult support effectively, which is well deployed and considered. In these cases, teachers demonstrate that they are aware of their responsibilities and plan tasks that ensure that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Although assessment practice across the wider curriculum is currently in its early stages, evidence in pupils' books shows that pupils are able to apply their skills to other subjects. It is apparent that pupils are making increasingly stronger progress, and consequently developing their knowledge and understanding in other subject areas aside from English and mathematics.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are mostly supported effectively from a young age. The teaching and learning emphasis on language acquisition and development, especially in early years, is resulting in this group of pupils making good progress from their lower starting points.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age. In both 2016 and 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was below the national average. However, the proportion of children who are achieving the expected standard is improving every year. The school's current assessment information shows that it is likely that there will be further improvement in 2018.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the early years is not consistently good. Children are not well enough supported to make good progress in all aspects of their learning. Teachers plan varied activities but these are not sufficiently engaging to sustain children's interest or attention. As a consequence, some children flit between activities and do not sufficiently deepen or extend their learning.
- Children are not routinely supported effectively to develop as learners over time. Adults do not consistently intervene in a timely manner to support and guide children's learning. Adults' questioning is too limited to help children build their vocabulary and understanding. Some activities lessen opportunities for children to make choices and

there are too few occasions for children to follow their interests. There are too few activities for children to test out their early literacy and number skills independently.

- Despite a wealth of assessment information, leaders are not using this information precisely enough to identify the progress that children are making. Teachers do not plan sharply for the next steps in children's development. Therefore, children do not always receive appropriate support and challenge to help them improve quickly from their lower starting points. As a result, too many children are not securely ready to start Year 1.
- Children respond positively to adults, and their relationships with adults are trusting and respectful. During whole-class sessions, such as story and singing time, children maintain their focus well. However, during 'free flow' time where children make their own choices, some children are not as considerate of each other and some are over-boisterous.
- Children are making better progress in reading and in the development of their phonics skills. During phonics sessions, evidence shows that teachers and some adults make sure that children practise blending and segmenting, and build on their previous learning.
- The early years leader works hard with the team to get to know the children well. She reflects upon her practice and clearly wants all children to achieve well. Additionally, she understands how crucial early years learning is to the future of the young children in her care.
- During adult-led focused activities, children make better and quicker progress. The early years leader plans these well and, consequently, children benefit from the support and opportunity to demonstrate what they can do. Records of this learning show that children's progress is quicker in these situations than in 'free flow' opportunities.
- Leaders have worked very positively with parents to establish good relationships and increase their involvement with the school. Parents appreciate the opportunity to contribute to their children's learning journey, and value the approachability of staff. They also comment about how happy their children are and the good start they have made to school.
- The focus on early language skills is successfully helping the large proportion of children who speak English as an additional language to develop their literacy knowledge and understanding effectively. This is because children have the opportunity to speak regularly and all adults model 'talk' well when giving instructions and supporting children in focused activities.
- Staff in the early years provide children with a safe, secure environment in which to learn and play. Adults have a good understanding of how to keep children safe and know how to assess when children might be at risk.

School details

Unique reference number	109461
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10046063

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	324
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Hooks
Headteacher	Lindsay Gould
Telephone number	01234 851 011
Website	www.bedfordroadlower.org.uk/
Email address	office@bedfordroad.school
Date of previous inspection	2–3 October 2014

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has transitioned from a lower school into a primary provision. In 2018/19 the school will have its first Year 6 cohort. The school's first set of Year 6 published national test results will be in 2019.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The percentage of pupils whose first language is not, or believed not to be, English is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. During some visits to classes, inspectors were accompanied by a member of the senior leadership team. Inspectors talked with pupils about their learning and looked at work in pupils' books. Inspectors also observed two assemblies.
- Three separate meetings were held with leaders to review the quality of pupils' work in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum.
- One inspector listened to pupils read and another met with a representative group of pupils to discuss their school experience. Additionally, another inspector met with a group of pupils to talk specifically about the work in their books. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- During the course of the inspection, all inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, during breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and also had a telephone conversation with the local authority representative. During the second day of the inspection, an additional meeting was held with the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- An inspector met with parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. Inspectors took into account 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the accompanying 29 free-text comments.
- The views of staff were gathered through discussions and from 30 responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents and policies, including safeguarding documents and records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. Inspectors scrutinised other documents, including: the school's development plan; leaders' self-evaluation; policies; monitoring records and evaluations of teaching and learning; and minutes of meetings. Other documents, including the local authority's and external advisers' reports following visits to the school, were also considered.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Marios Solomonides	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Copping	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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