

# Ball Green Primary School

Whitfield Road, Ball Green, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 8AJ

## Inspection dates

4–5 December 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils’ attainment and progress in key stage 2 have declined since the previous inspection because of weaknesses in leadership.
- Pupils’ progress in writing at the end of Year 6 was well below average in 2018 and lower than the previous year.
- Not all pupils make the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics because the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Some disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not make the progress they should in their learning.
- Governors are not asking sufficiently challenging questions of senior leaders to gain an accurate view of the standard of education provided by the school.
- Many actions taken by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching have so far had too little time to become embedded and strengthen pupils’ progress.
- The introduction of the revised curriculum across school was too slow, leaving many pupils with gaps in their knowledge.
- Middle leaders, including the SEND leader, are just beginning to develop in their roles.

### The school has the following strengths

- The appointment of the current headteacher brought much-needed stability to the school. The positive impact on the quality of teaching since his appointment is apparent.
- The newly formed leadership team has taken decisive action to tackle weak teaching. This has improved the quality of teaching and learning and pupils’ progress is strengthening.
- Senior leaders have secure and well-focused plans for improvement. They are targeting the correct priorities.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. This is contributing well to their learning. Pupils’ welfare needs are well met by a skilled staff team.
- Attendance is increasing and is above average.
- Early years is well led. Children get off to a flying start in Nursery and Reception from their individual starting points.
- The proportion of children leaving early years well prepared to join Year 1 is increasing.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the impact of leaders and managers, including governors, on pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - supporting middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), to improve pupils' achievement in the areas for which they have responsibility
  - ensuring that monitoring activities are tightly focused and rigorous
  - improving the quality of challenge provided by governors
  - embedding the changes made to increase their impact
  - reinforcing existing high expectations.
- Improve the consistency of teaching so all groups of pupils are making stronger progress by ensuring that teachers:
  - develop the skills needed to help pupils make better progress in learning
  - match learning tasks more precisely to pupils' learning needs, especially those who are most able
  - have sufficiently high expectations of all pupils, expecting much more work from pupils in lessons
  - adapt teaching for those pupils not making enough progress to better support them in their learning
  - encourage pupils to take more risks so they learn from their mistakes
  - more fully support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND in lessons
  - maximise the impact of specific intervention programmes
  - strengthen their use of questioning to probe and challenge pupils' understanding.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since September 2016, the school has undergone a period of instability in leadership. This was covered by two temporary headteachers and internal promotions. This hindered school improvement, resulting in a dip in pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6.
- New senior leaders put in place many initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning. So far, they have had too little time to bring about rapid improvement in pupils' progress in key stage 2. Hence, the quality of teaching is not consistently good and not all pupils make the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Monitoring carried out by the SENCo and other middle leaders is not rigorous enough to bring about greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. So far, these leaders have had some support in their new roles but their work has not had enough time to show sufficient impact.
- School leaders have high expectations but these are not reinforced stringently enough across the school, permitting inconsistency in the quality of teaching to remain.
- Since joining the school, the headteacher – together with senior leaders – has worked diligently to improve teaching. Weak teaching was dealt with decisively and the quality of teaching has improved.
- Teachers find attending relevant courses and training events valuable. These courses help to improve their skills well so the quality of teaching is now much stronger than previously.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is being well targeted to provide a wide range of experiences and support. This is helping pupils make better progress in their learning in a number of classes and subjects across the school.
- High-quality school sport is being provided for pupils through the careful use of the sport premium by school leaders.
- The alternative provision OPUS is well managed. Pupils are successfully reintegrated into mainstream schools because of the support provided.
- The breakfast club and after-school clubs meet the needs of pupils well. Pupils get a good start to the day and participate in a wide range of activities in the clubs.
- The curriculum has been radically overhauled since the arrival of the new headteacher. It is now much more closely linked to pupils' interests and builds learning sequentially as they progress through school. It is now helping to make up for the gaps in pupils' knowledge in a range of subjects.
- School leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and how they should tackle further school improvement. They have well-designed plans which are realistic and well-focused on bringing about short- and long-term improvements.

## Governance of the school

- Although the governing body has had an external review of its effectiveness, governors are not asking challenging enough questions of senior leaders to help them understand how well the school is performing. Some members of the governing body have an overgenerous view of the quality of education the school is providing.
- Governors linked to subjects are not holding leaders sufficiently to account for pupils' academic underperformance. They do not check carefully enough on how well specific groups of pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics.
- During the period of leadership instability, governors worked successfully to bring about the appointment of a skilled headteacher who is bringing the school together and improving the quality of education.
- Governors recognise that, although improving, the quality of education requires improvement and they are focused on tackling this robustly.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a secure culture of safeguarding permeating school life. Regular checks on staff's understanding of how to follow the agreed safeguarding processes outlined in the school policy are carried out by school leaders to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities.
- Staff and governors undertake regular safeguarding training to ensure that they are up to date with changes in legal requirements to keep pupils safe.
- Regular checks are carried out by the school to ensure that staff are suitably qualified and vetted before they are permitted to work in the school. School leaders are aware of what they must do to be alert for radicalisation and extremism.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Because the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is not consistently good, pupils do not all make the progress they should in their learning.
- Pupils' books and visits to lessons show that pupils are not sufficiently challenged in a few lessons. This slows their learning, particularly the most able and pupils with SEND.
- Learning tasks occasionally fail to help pupils develop the skills they require to make better progress in their learning. Learning tasks are not always matched well enough to meet pupils' learning needs.
- When pupils are not making good enough progress in their learning, they are not always supported as well as they might be by teachers and teaching assistants. Interventions to support specific groups of pupils – such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND – do not always support them well in maximising their learning.
- Many teachers have high expectations, but not all.
- The majority of teachers ask probing questions of pupils. Some teachers encourage pupils to learn from their mistakes, which is supporting their learning well.

- Many teachers use information and communication technology effectively in lessons to ignite pupils' imaginations and extend their mathematical understanding effectively.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled at supporting pupils in their learning. In lessons, they support pupils at risk of falling behind, helping them keep up with the other pupils.
- Most classrooms contain 'working walls' which pupils use effectively to support their current learning. If they are stuck, most pupils know where to look to find help and support about their topic.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are well supported in their learning through the caring and nurturing approach which is apparent in all classrooms.
- OPUS provision effectively supports pupils at risk of exclusion. It helps small numbers of pupils from across the local authority to prepare successfully for their return to classes in mainstream schools.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They report it happens occasionally but is usually resolved rapidly and to their satisfaction when reported to adults.
- Many pupils display a sense of pride in their school. Presentation in many books is of a high standard because of how highly pupils value their education.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and well mannered around school. In corridors, pupils regularly give visitors a cheery wave as they pass and say hello.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Attendance is higher than the national average because the importance of attending school is communicated effectively by staff to pupils, parents and carers.
- Occasionally, a small minority of pupils cause some slight disruption to learning when they fail to listen to their teachers or talk about topics other than their school work when they should be completing learning tasks.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Requires improvement**

- Pupils' progress to the end of Year 6 has slowed since the previous inspection. In 2018, progress made by pupils was well below average in reading and writing. It was below average in mathematics.
- The progress made by pupils with SEND was less than that made by all pupils in 2018.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check declined over a three-year period since 2016, although it still remains around average.

- Pupils' current books and the school's latest assessments show that pupils and groups such as disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are not all making strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's latest assessments and work in pupils' books show that they are beginning to make better progress in their learning, particularly in mathematics. Their progress is currently stronger in mathematics than in reading or writing.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined at the end of Year 6 is increasing.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2018 in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly average. It was higher in mathematics than in reading and writing.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- From joining Nursery with knowledge and skills typically below those for their age, children make good progress in their learning. By the end of Reception, the majority of children are well prepared to join Year 1.
- Early years provision is effectively led by a skilled practitioner supported by an able team. Collectively, they are making sure that children get off to a flying start to their learning at Ball Green. The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the setting. This is enabling her to accurately identify the next targets to improve early years further.
- Children's learning is assessed regularly and the information is used well to plan next steps in learning so children are well challenged in lessons. The indoor and outdoor classrooms are used effectively to support children in their learning.
- In lessons, children are given many opportunities to select and participate in a wide range of learning and development activities. These support them well in their learning. A group of children were observed studying their Arctic topic. They smashed up ice blocks excitedly and animatedly made snowmen from a modelling material.
- Children behave well, socialise with their friends and take turns while queuing to eat the scrumptious food on offer at lunchtime.
- Transition into school is seamless and parents report they are well supported by the school when their children join the Nursery class.
- Occasionally, adults oversimplify questions for children if they are unable to answer, instead of initially pitching the question at the correct level for the children.
- The Reception classroom is bright, stimulating and highly engaging for children, while the Nursery classroom is a little less engaging.

## School details

Unique reference number	124020
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10085745

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	368
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Dawson
Headteacher	Jonathan Hankey
Telephone number	01782 234 811
Website	<a href="http://www.ballgreenprimary.co.uk">www.ballgreenprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@ballgreenprimary.co.uk">office@ballgreenprimary.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	26–27 February 2014

## Information about this school

- Ball Green Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is slightly below average.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school hosts OPUS, which is a specialist unit for a small number of pupils at risk of exclusion or who have social, emotional or mental health needs.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2017. The two deputy headteachers took up their posts in September 2016 to support the associate and interim headteachers

who led the school following the departure of the substantive headteacher in September 2016.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons. Some of these were observed jointly with the headteacher and a deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, school staff and four members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and lunchtimes. They also spoke with several parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised the pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a range of their books. They also listened to a few pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest performance information showing the progress of pupils currently in the school.
- Inspectors also scrutinised plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 27 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. They considered 20 free-text responses from parents, 32 responses to the staff questionnaire and 32 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Declan McCauley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Elizabeth Ellis-Martin	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector

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