

County Bridge Primary School

Anson Rd, Walsall, WS2 0DH

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Too much teaching requires improvement and too little teaching is good or better.
- Teachers' questioning skills and the quality of planning are not consistently effective enough to promote rapid progress for most pupils. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to work independently and with their classmates.
- The rate of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not fast enough.
- Whilst attainment at the end of each key stage is improving, there is too much uneven progress within lessons.
- The monitoring of school performance by leaders, including governors, has not been effective enough to consolidate necessary improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Some subject leaders lack the necessary skills and knowledge to drive improvement rapidly in the areas for which they have responsibility.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear understanding of the development needs of the school.
- Pupils enjoy reading and this supports their learning in other areas.
- The school provides a caring and nurturing environment and enables pupils to behave well and feel safe.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are strong and supportive.
- The school makes good use of its partnership with the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority, and account was taken of responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Informal discussions took place with parents, and account was taken of parent letters submitted and the eight responses from parents via the on-line questionnaire Parent View.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including national assessment data, the school's own assessments, pupils' work, the school's development plan, local authority reports, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding information, and leaders' reports and action plans.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alwyne Jolly

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils is supported by school action.
- The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or supported by school action plus is below average.
- The school meets the current floor standards which are set by the government as minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- The school provides wraparound care for children of nursery age in the afternoons.
- The school holds the International Award to recognise its work through links with schools in other countries.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to good by:
 - improving teachers' questioning skills so that the teachers promote thinking at a deeper level for pupils of all abilities
 - planning more carefully to meet individual needs and thereby raising the level of challenge and active engagement in learning for all pupils, but particularly for the most able in mathematics
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants encourage independent and collaborative learning.
- Ensure children make faster progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving their understanding and application of letters and sounds
 - developing children's ability to work both independently and in groups, and to make decisions about their learning.
- Improve the impact of the work of leaders on learning by:
 - ensuring that feedback from lesson monitoring establishes a clear and urgent direction for improvement
 - ensuring that all subject leaders know accurately the standards, quality of teaching and improvement needs in their subjects
 - developing the ability of governors to monitor the school's performance and hold leaders to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start the Nursery class with skills which are generally below those expected for their age, especially in communication and language. The learning environment and care and support of staff enable children to become confident and to approach learning enthusiastically. However, their rate of progress is not fast enough because they are not given sufficient opportunities to make decisions and choices within their learning.
- Similarly, children's progress in Reception is not fast enough because adults do not offer sufficient challenge through their questioning. Tasks set do not challenge children enough to explore and explain their learning. By the end of the Reception class, children are just below standards expected for their age.
- In spite of pupils attaining standards in line with those nationally at the end of Year 2, progress in Years 1 and 2 is not consistently fast enough as the pace of learning is often too slow. Pupils in Year 1 last year did not meet expected standards in the national test in phonics (letters and sounds).
- More able pupils, particularly in mathematics, do not achieve as well as those nationally because they are not challenged sufficiently.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities achieve in line with their peers.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium also achieve in line with their peers nationally, but not with their own age group in school. Funding is used to offer small group and one-to-one support and this enables these pupils to keep pace with children in this group nationally.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with standards expected nationally and has improved strongly over the last two years because teaching is generally good for the older age groups.
- Children develop a great love of reading and can talk about a wide range of authors and styles of writing. They are able to use reading for enjoyment and to support learning in other areas.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too uneven in the school. Some teaching is effective, but too many lessons lack the drive to deliver good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children's learning is very much teacher directed and this limits children's ability to develop independence and decision making.
- In too many lessons, teachers talk for too long and do not engage pupils actively in exploring their learning together in pairs or small groups. Too little is expected of these pupils and, while planning takes account of individual needs, adult intervention often limits their progress.
- Teaching assistants are not always given enough guidance on how to challenge pupils to develop skills in both independent and collaborative learning, especially the more able pupils. Opportunities are also missed for them to contribute more fully to whole class teaching.
- The use of success descriptions supports learning, but pupils do not have enough opportunities to focus on these regularly during lessons.
- Where teaching is good, teachers match the challenge of work to pupils' ability through careful planning; pupils are given the opportunity to explore questions together. Pupils can then explain their thinking and assess their own progress against clear descriptions of success.
- In lessons where teaching is good, high expectations of pupil discussion and higher level thinking are valued, and pupils develop skills to work independently and in groups. For example, in more effective mathematics lessons, pupils were encouraged to explore ways to solve problems, working with partners, with guidance on what successful work looks like.
- Teachers' marking generally gives good feedback to help pupils to know their next learning steps, but there is no expectation that pupils will follow this guidance in their next piece of work.
- Relationships in lessons are mainly good, and positive attitudes to learning generally support

pupils' progress. Teachers use praise and rewards, and work hard to raise pupils' self-esteem.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils want to learn and support each other in most classes well.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and feel safe. They say that behaviour in school is good.
- They are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and how to protect themselves or get help. They say that there is very little bullying and that staff deal with it well when it does occur.
- Pupils are aware of potential dangers outside school and how to stay safe.
- Parents express positive views about behaviour and safety.
- Attendance is average and has improved steadily in recent years.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is usually good, but not always exemplary. Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other, adults and visitors, and are tolerant of differences.
- Pupils make a good contribution to school life, acting as librarians, mentors and helpers.
- The effective promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to pupils' positive attitudes. There are high expectations of the way in which pupils treat each other and their environment, and they respond thoughtfully to this. They are mindful of the needs of others and show tolerance and respect for those from other backgrounds.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher's evaluation of the school's performance identifies appropriate areas of strengths and weaknesses and there is a clear and well-focused development plan for improvement.
- However, the vision for improvement is not consistently shared and understood by all staff and this is one reason why the quality of teaching and learning has not improved quickly enough.
- Although the headteacher monitors teaching regularly, outcomes from monitoring are not pursued with sufficient vigour. It is not clear how urgently teachers are encouraged to meet improvement targets, and this again is a barrier to faster improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Subject leaders are not all sufficiently skilled or knowledgeable about the quality of teaching in their subjects to make a full contribution to driving improvement.
- The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination effectively. The headteacher tracks pupils' progress systematically so that timely interventions address individual underachievement.
- The headteacher has made very good use of support from the local authority to address the development needs of the school and to support its capacity to improve.
- Ongoing training and management of performance are challenging teachers to raise standards, but this has been slow to impact upon the quality of teaching overall.
- The curriculum provides interest and excitement for pupils through high profile events like the Christmas concerts, the Oscar Awards, and topics like the focus on Australia. Science has a particularly high profile within the curriculum. Out of school activities add further interest for the children.
- There is evidence of a good focus on basic literacy skills being developed through other subjects.
- Links with parents encourage a supportive partnership. Parents express great satisfaction with the work of the school and are keen to engage in all activities offered.
- The school provides wraparound care for children of nursery age in the afternoons.
- The school holds the International Award to recognise its work through links with schools in other countries.
- **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is strongly committed to supporting the school and giving the very best care and nurture to its pupils. It is working hard to hold the school to account, but does not yet have sufficient skills to use the range of information available to make fully accurate judgements about the school's performance, including how well it compares with other schools. It does not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the way in which the pupil premium influences the achievement of the pupils who attract the funding, to enable it to judge its effectiveness. While the governors have high expectations of the performance of the headteacher they have not yet examined in sufficient detail the link between teachers' effectiveness and salary, and pupils' achievement. Governor visits contribute to the happy and settled atmosphere and expectations within school. They fulfil their duties with regard to safeguarding and ensure that appropriate training supports this area.

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	104189
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	404931

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr. Roy Duckers
Headteacher	Mrs. Dawn Herriott
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 October 2010
Telephone number	0117 311 5245
Fax number	0117 311 5245
Email address	office@countybridge.walsall.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012