

# Brackensdale Junior School

Walthamstow Drive, Mackworth Estate, Derby, DE22 4BS

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Teaching, leadership and management have not ensured that pupils' progress is always measured accurately and that the information gained is used effectively in planning or to adjust learning in lessons.
- Teaching in a range of subjects does not focus well enough on pupils' targets for literacy and numeracy.
- Attainment is too low in English and mathematics, and too few pupils make consistently good progress, especially more-able pupils.
- Marking does not often enough show pupils how to improve. Consequently, pupils are unsure of the next steps in their learning.
- School improvement planning does not focus enough on its intended impact on pupils' progress.
- The full impact of leaders' and managers' work with parents, to improve the attendance of the few pupils who are absent too often, is not yet evident.

### The school has the following strengths

- Support from governors for recent actions by senior leaders is beginning to improve teaching and learning.
- Teachers are rising well to the challenges arising from linking the management of their performance more closely to pupils' progress.
- The excellent provision in the Phoenix Suite supports this group of pupils very well.
- Positive relationships throughout the school create a welcoming, calm and purposeful learning environment for the pupils.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel very safe. They enjoy learning, work hard and want to do well.
- Good links with external agencies benefit pupils' learning and personal development.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 16 lessons, including seven joint observations with senior staff. They also observed play and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of the 10 parents who replied to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were analysed. Parents' views were also received informally at the start of the school day.
- Account was taken of phone calls from parents, and the responses to the school's own surveys of parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including information about pupils' progress and attendance, the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation document and record and policies about safeguarding.
- Inspectors examined the work in pupils' books, sampled sessions where pupils were learning letters and sounds (phonics), and listened to pupils read.

## Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Beckett

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This junior school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school. All pupils are grouped into mixed age classes, mostly taught in ability groups across Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs, specifically autism. Known in school as the 'Phoenix Suite', the provision caters for 14 pupils in Years 3 to 6. A further 32 pupils are integrated, with resourced provision, into the rest of the school.
- The school shares its expertise from its work in the Phoenix Suite, with other schools.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium is higher than average. This provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A 'drop-in' breakfast club operates on school mornings.
- The school shares its site with an infant school, which is separately led and managed.

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

- Secure consistently good and better teaching throughout the school by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially the most able in each class, can achieve
  - ensuring all assessments reflect pupils' stages of learning accurately and that all staff understand their individual and collective responsibility for outcomes in Year 6
  - checking that the new marking policy is being used properly at all times so that pupils are always clear about what they need to do to improve
  - ensuring teachers give pupils time to respond to marking and helping them to see that by being mindful of their literacy and numeracy targets in all of their work, they might reach them faster.
- Raise achievement in English and mathematics by:
  - in reading, making sure that pupils understand the meaning of the words they read
  - in writing, ensuring that pupils remember to apply the skills they learn in literacy lessons in all of their writing, for instance by marking writing skills wherever they occur
  - in mathematics, providing more opportunities over a wider range of subjects for pupils to use their numeracy skills, and ensuring that teachers adjust pupils' learning more quickly when they realise pupils are coping easily with work given and need further challenge.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - sharpening school improvement planning and linking the steps to success detailed within it to measureable improvements in pupils' progress
  - working more closely with the parents concerned, to reduce persistent absence so that pupils' learning is not compromised.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils join and leave the school with attainment that is significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Over time, progress has not been rapid enough to raise standards above this level.
- Pupils' organisation of writing is weak and common spelling, punctuation and grammar errors persist through to Year 6. Pupils have targets for writing but they are not sure how to achieve them, and do not use them well enough at all times.
- In writing and mathematics, more-able pupils in each class often demonstrate ability beyond what they have initially been given to do. However, they are not always given the harder work they need to take their learning further. As a result, fewer pupils than could reasonably be expected reach the higher National Curriculum levels in English and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- Pupils mostly enjoy reading and are successfully encouraged to read on their own. They read words accurately and use their phonics skills to help with unfamiliar words. However, they are not always sure what words mean, and their comprehension skills are weak.
- Through using computer-based learning for research, pupils are beginning to realise the importance of understanding what they read. They enjoy reading different character parts in play scripts, and engaging in drama activities.
- Pupils know different ways of calculating and readily demonstrate how they use, for example, number lines and multiplication grids to help them. Their books show that, when given the opportunities, they use and apply these skills in problem-solving activities with increasing competence.
- Pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding are beginning to close gaps in their learning, particularly in mathematics. In 2012, pupil premium funded pupils attainment had narrowed to only two terms behind the others in English and just over a term behind, in mathematics, and a higher proportion achieved the expected Level 4 than in the previous year. These pupils benefit from opportunities to learn in smaller groups or on their own to address particular learning needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are taught with the rest of their age-group make progress similar to that of other pupils. A range of support programmes help them as does the input from well-briefed support staff.
- Pupils in the Phoenix Suite make excellent progress relative to their starting points and behavioural and personal needs. Their learning is very precisely matched to those needs through individualised programmes. Every small step achieved is meticulously tracked and recorded. The information is used effectively in planning and, if necessary, to adjust their individual programmes.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- A major factor limiting pupils' achievement has been teachers' lack of precise and accurate assessments of what pupils already know. Teachers have often underestimated pupils' learning prior to Year 6 and therefore have not secured the best possible progress for all pupils in all year groups.
- Marking often shows what pupils have done well but not how to improve, and there is no expectation that pupils will respond to marking comments. The quality of pupils' writing is rarely commented on in other subjects.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations teachers have of their behaviour but teachers do not always have the same high expectations of all pupils' learning and progress. Spelling errors often go uncorrected. The daily teaching of phonics and of spelling patterns requires improvement to ensure articulation is accurate, and pupils always copy words correctly when constructing spelling lists.
- Teachers manage mixed-age classes well, often by teaching pupils in smaller groups, set by their ability. The usual method is to build on what pupils have already learned and this is beginning to work well. However, learning is sometimes not adjusted quickly enough to enable pupils who have shown they are ready, to learn more quickly. This is more often the case in mathematics.
- Teachers are increasingly adept at enabling pupils to be involved in helping each other to improve their learning. Sometimes, however, pupils are not sure of their targets or how to achieve them. They are not reminded of their targets often enough to enable speedier progress.
- Teaching is exemplary in the Phoenix Suite. Here, staff have in-depth knowledge of each pupil and learning programmes are very precisely suited to their individual needs. Teachers also take account of what disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in mainstream need to learn. Sometimes, however, the learning planned for these pupils contains too many elements instead of proceeding one step at a time, and pupils become confused.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes enable lessons to proceed without disruption, and make play and lunchtimes happy social occasions. The systems for managing pupils' behaviour, including in the Phoenix Suite, are effective. Pupils and parents say behaviour is typically good. Pupils say there is 'sometimes some naughtiness' but it is dealt with 'quickly and fairly'.
- Parents say the school keeps their children safe and teaches them to behave well. Pupils demonstrate this well by, for example, respecting themselves and others and being polite and considerate at all times. They work together well in lessons, help each other to improve, and show good ability to work independently when required to do so.
- Pupils know the different forms bullying can take, such as undue teasing or harassment, or through using modern technology. They recognise the importance of reporting bullying in order to keep themselves and others safe. They are certain any member of staff would listen to them and help them with any concerns.

- Pupils say they 'learn lots of things' and school is 'half fun and half work'. They thoroughly enjoy the visits and visitors that enhance their learning, particularly in topic work, for example, the visit to the local Sea Life Centre, and a theatre workshop based on the story of '*Tom's Midnight Garden*.'
- Activities such as the drumming workshops that contribute to pupils' musical knowledge and understanding, and the good range of extra-curricular activities, further enhance their learning and personal development.
- Attendance is average, having improved in recent years. However, the persistent absence of a few pupils' adversely affects their progress and social development.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- School improvement planning does not fully reflect the school's now clearly stated ambition to raise achievement. The plan has the right priorities but does not focus them sharply enough on increasing the proportion of pupils making good progress. The school's self-evaluation is over-generous because it does not take enough account of pupil progress outcomes.
- Senior leaders have only recently begun to tackle weaknesses in assessment but are now using changes in the way teachers' performance is managed to do so. Staff recognise, and most value, the stronger links being made between their teaching and pupils' learning.
- Evaluations of teaching and learning accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement in lessons and in pupils' work. The move towards sharing good practice and teaching teachers and pupils how to coach each other is a positive one but it has not been in place long enough to assess its full impact.
- Although attainment remains stubbornly low, the school has addressed the issues raised at and since the previous inspection, and it is now tackling other weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. Taken together, all of this shows it has capacity for further improvement.
- Different subjects are brought together in themes that interest and motivate the pupils, promote their personal development and include opportunities for them to learn about different faiths and cultures at home and abroad.
- Good partnerships that have been developed, such as those with the secondary schools and special schools to which pupils transfer, and with external agencies that support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit pupils' learning and personal development.
- Safeguarding meets current requirements, including for child protection. The school cares for its pupils really well, fostering good relations and teaching them to be reflective and to care and support each other. It successfully ensures that, as far as possible, all pupils, including those in the Phoenix Suite, are fully included in everything it has to offer and that there is no discrimination of any sort within the school.
- The strong focus on individual progress is a major factor in the excellent all-round progress pupils in the Phoenix Suite make, and in the success of the nurture groups, providing good stepping stones into the main school classes where appropriate. This is now being used effectively throughout the school to identify where additional support might be needed for any

pupil, and especially for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

- The local authority supports the school appropriately through visits and training opportunities. Further training is planned to ensure assessments are accurate, and to improve governors' ability to hold staff accountable for pupils' progress and achievements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is improving because training is helping governors to understand their roles better and not to rely too much on the headteacher for information about teachers' and pupils' performance. Although they have a broad understanding of how well the school is doing, they are only just beginning to fully understand how to interpret the wide range of data available to them and as yet they have not asked probing enough questions to challenge the school to do better. Nevertheless, they support the school well and gain valuable first-hand information through their work in school and their links with different classes. They support the headteacher in using information about teachers' performance to make decisions about salary increases. They know how pupil premium money is being used and where it is starting to close gaps in learning, for example, with one-to-one tuition, small group teaching, and the use of netbooks. They monitor all spending well.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112736
<b>Local authority</b>	Derby
<b>Inspection number</b>	411709

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Don Parker
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Hall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01332 341171
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