

Bilston Church of England Primary School

Albany Crescent, Bilston, WV14 0HU

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

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

- The attainment and progress of Year 6 pupils did not meet the minimum standards expected nationally in 2012.
- Although progress is currently improving, it is not consistently good and some teaching still requires improvement.
- Achievement in writing has not improved as quickly as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils do not always have time and opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Teachers' marking of work, particularly of writing, does not always help pupils to know how their work should be improved. Pupils are not always given opportunities and time to respond to teachers' comments.
- Teachers do not always ensure that the more-able pupils are provided with tasks which encourage them to work independently and extend their thinking skills.
- Leaders and governors have not yet raised the quality of teaching and achievement to be good.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors, with the support of external expertise, have done a lot of work this year to improve the quality of teaching. These actions are leading to better rates of progress and the school is raising pupils' achievement across all years. Staff are strongly committed to ensuring that the improvement is fully sustained.
- There is some strong teaching in the school which is accelerating learning for pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils enjoy the range of activities that the school offers.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. This is a happy school and pupils are treated with respect and as individuals in an atmosphere of care and support. There are positive relationships with each other and with staff.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are well supported through individual support and small teaching groups, and they often

achieve well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons and saw all classes in operation. Three of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher. They also observed playtime and lunchtime activities.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports on lesson observations, the school's improvement plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and also scrutinised a range of work with the headteacher.
- Inspectors carried out short visits to lessons looking at aspects of the school's work including small-group support.
- Discussions were held with pupils and an inspector listened to them read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, governors, senior and middle managers, and parents. In addition, the inspector talked with a representative from the local authority and the National Leader of Education who has been supporting the school in improving teaching and learning.

Inspection team

Sarah Somers, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sandra Ewing

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals or from service families) is well-above average. Over half of the pupils receive pupil premium funding.
- Less than half of the pupils are White British and the other pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- More pupils join and leave the school at different times of the year than is usual nationally.
- All classes are of single age.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2012, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better to enable all pupils to make at least good progress and raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - sharing the strongest practice in teaching and learning that exists within the school and also ensuring that all teachers continue to receive the help they need to improve from outside sources where appropriate
 - giving pupils more opportunities to work on their own so they become independent learners and take responsibility for their learning
 - setting more demanding work for the more-able pupils in lessons
 - ensuring that staff always apply the school's marking policy by giving pupils clear and concise guidance when marking work so they know how to improve and are given time to respond to teachers' advice.
 - ensuring that basic skills in English and mathematics are planned, taught and applied through all areas of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by:
 - creating more opportunities for using and applying writing skills in all subject areas
 - ensuring that pupils in all year groups have time to revisit, redraft and improve their writing
 - making sure that the school's clear policy for marking and assessment is applied rigorously in writing.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that leaders at all levels play a role in checking the quality of teaching so that the improvements to teaching and achievement are sustained.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Attainment in 2012 was significantly below average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils who made expected progress in English and mathematics was also significantly below average. Fewer than three out of every five pupils reached the level expected for their age in both English and mathematics, and the school did not reach the government's current floor standards. However, several pupils did not join this year group until Year 6, and several others had not had much previous opportunity of learning English.
- There is some variation in the progress made by pupils in different classes. Nevertheless, inspectors' observations of pupils' work in class and in their books confirm that pupils across the school are making better progress in English and mathematics than last year, although progress in writing is less strong. Progress slows because pupils are not always given opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects, and more-able pupils are not always fully challenged in lessons to ensure that they reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Recent progress and attainment information shows that achievement in the current Year 6 is improving rapidly. Pupils' unvalidated results from the recent 2013 tests are broadly average, although writing is a little behind those in reading and mathematics. These latest results also show an increase in the number of pupils who attained the higher levels. The school's tracking of pupils' progress suggests that this improvement is likely to be sustained in 2014.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that vary from year to year but are generally below the levels typical for their age. Children quickly settle into the school's routines, understand the expectation of behaviour, enjoy their learning and make reasonable progress.
- Steady progress across Key Stage 1 has led to improved standards in Year 2 in the current year, which were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading and, from the start, children learn letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) which helps them to become enthusiastic readers. In the national phonics screening check in Year 1 last year and also in the unvalidated 2013 results, pupils attained above the national average.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are currently in the school make similar progress to that of other pupils because of one-to-one or small-group teaching, and careful checks carried out on their learning and progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, some of whom are at an early stage of learning the language, achieve as well as other pupils in the school. They receive helpful individual guidance and learn successfully alongside other pupils in lessons. Those with little English who join the school very late in their primary years struggle to reach similar standards to those of other pupils in the short time they have available.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively, such as for individual and small-group teaching and to use the services of the family-support worker. Eligible pupils are now making similar progress to that of other pupils due to the carefully considered activities the school provides to support their personal and academic development. In 2012, at the end of Year 6, the attainment of these pupils in English and mathematics compared to that of other Year 6 pupils

was about a term and a half higher in reading and mathematics and similar in writing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good or better across the school. Teaching over time has varied too much in quality and has not ensured that all pupils make consistently good progress. Although actions by the headteacher and senior leaders are securing improvement, the quality of teaching remains too variable.
- Where teaching requires improvement, pupils are not given activities that fully challenge them and progress slows, particularly that of the more able. As a result, these pupils' learning is not extended sufficiently for them to reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- The school's information on pupils' current progress and the work in their books show that achievement is rising because of improvements in teaching. However, writing is not always taught as well as reading and mathematics.
- Teachers mark pupils work regularly and offer encouraging comments to motivate them. However, the quality of marking is not consistently helpful to pupils. While pupils' work is regularly marked and pupils are praised, they are not always told how to improve their work and are not given the opportunity or time to respond to marking or act upon the guidance given.
- In writing, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to revisit and edit their work and improve the quality of their writing. Pupils' ability to assess their own written work and that of their peers is not fully developed in all classes. They lack opportunities to write at length in different subjects.
- The regular assessment and careful tracking of pupils' progress have made all teachers much more aware of their accountability for the progress of pupils in their classes. There is increased awareness of the levels which pupils are expected to achieve.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to work independently and take more responsibility for their own learning. Opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects are not yet fully developed, and this hinders the levels pupils can reach.
- Where teaching is good, lessons are interesting with short, sharp, tasks at the correct level for each pupil. Teachers demonstrate tasks clearly and ensure that pupils understand the learning through skilful questioning. They use a variety of strategies to keep pupils engaged. For example, while teaching pupils in Year 6 about the Second World War, the teacher first involved pupils in short discussions with a partner to generate ideas and extend pupils' thinking.
- Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers. Good liaison with the class teachers gives assistants a clear understanding of what is expected of them and they provide helpful support, particularly to pupils eligible to the pupil premium.
- Teachers use a range of effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and keep them interested in learning. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are warm and respectful.
- The many colourful displays of pupils' work in classrooms and prompts to teaching and learning

throughout the interior of the school reflect the genuine pride that adults and pupils clearly take in their school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils get on well together. They were polite, courteous and friendly during the inspection with frequent examples of good manners. Relationships with adults in the school are good and contribute very effectively to a calm, well-ordered and welcoming atmosphere.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They are keen to learn. Occasionally, a few become restless, lose concentration or become too passive when they are expected to sit for unnecessarily long periods on the carpet areas.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents who spoke to the inspectors agree that they are safe. One parent commented, 'Everyone says good morning. Behaviour is good and no issue with bullying. This is such a happy, friendly school.' Pupils know how to seek help if they are worried and are confident adults will deal swiftly with their concerns. Pupils from different backgrounds get on very well together. They know how to keep themselves safe on the internet.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and can explain how bullying differs from the occasional 'fall-outs' which they have with each other. Pupils are insistent that these incidents are uncommon, but are confident that they can call on adult help if necessary.
- Pupils have a range of different responsibilities, such as school councillors and peer supporters and they are very proud of their roles in the school.
- The school has clear procedures for registering and improving attendance and the school gives a high priority to encouraging pupils to attend regularly and most pupils attend well. The school works closely with the education welfare officer to follow up the small minority of pupils with poorer attendance. The school had an epidemic of chicken pox during the year and a number of pupils were absent. Attendance is broadly average compared to other schools nationally.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The leadership and management of the school are not yet good because the quality of teaching and achievement of the pupils are not yet consistently good. The headteacher, senior leaders and external support from a local headteacher from an outstanding school, have done much to improve teaching. However, improvements are comparatively recent and leaders and managers at all levels do not yet play a full role in checking on and improving teaching to ensure improvements are fully realised and better achievement is consolidated.
- The headteacher is accurate in his understanding of the school's strengths and priorities and is aware that the key focus is to improve achievement and the quality of teaching. Addressing the weaknesses in teaching and progress of pupils have, rightly, been the key priorities this year. The headteacher understands the features of high-quality teaching and is, consequently, able to judge teaching accurately. Targets set for teachers have led to improvements in the quality of teaching in lessons. However, the sharing of the good practice and expertise of colleagues is not fully exploited to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- The local authority has given the school intensive monitoring and support since September 2012. It recognises the need for improvement in teaching, learning, progress and attainment.

- The school development plan is produced from the school's self-evaluation and shows clear vision for the continued improvement of the school. It has clear targets outlined for improvement with timescales and success criteria.
- The headteacher leads a dedicated team of staff who are positive about the school. This was seen in the unanimously positive comments of staff in their survey. All contribute considerably to the school's values of caring and support for the individual. Leaders take appropriate action to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle any form of discrimination. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure pupils with very specific and often complex needs are supported well.
- The headteacher takes appropriate action on teachers' salaries based upon pupils' achievement. This action presents challenging targets to teachers linked to pupils' progress and achievement and gives clear guidance on what a teacher must do in order to progress through the pay scales.
- Visits, visitors and a range of experiences, such as music workshops, visiting theatre groups and residential trips enhance and add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. The themed enrichment days, pupils' performances and sporting opportunities successfully underpin their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The progress of pupils eligible to the pupil premium is monitored well by the school and the money is well targeted to support this group in making better progress.
- Support from a National Leader in Education and the local Teaching School has been effective in the training and coaching of staff skills in improving teaching and learning. The school has effective partnerships including close links with the local church and community.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors said that the school keeps them well informed about their children's progress. They have the confidence to approach staff and share concerns. The school provides support for pupils and families when necessary through the work of the family-support worker.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well organised and is contributing well to school improvement. Governors make regular visits to see how well pupils are achieving and are supportive of the school's work. They understand the school's low performance in 2012 and monitor standards and progress through regular meetings with the local authority to ensure that achievement rises. They question the headteacher regularly about school performance and he shares all information with them on pupils' progress, teaching and the management of staff performance. Governors require evidence that teaching is effective in enabling pupils to make good progress before they consider staff worthy of reward with higher pay. They are convinced that recent training is improving teaching and raising pupils' achievement and are familiar with the evidence to show this perspective is accurate. They set and check targets for the headteacher in managing his performance. Governors have managed the school's finances effectively, including the use of pupil premium, to ensure that resources are spent wisely and in the best interests of eligible pupils. Governors are developing their skills in monitoring through a range of activities. They ensure that statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

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	130305
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	402417

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Johnson
Headteacher	Gary Gentle
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2011
Telephone number	01902 558690
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