

Bowmansgreen Primary School

Telford Road, London Colney, St Albans, AL2 1PH

Inspection dates 17–18 October 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		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is school requires improvement. It is not yet good because

- Teaching and learning is not consistently good or better across the school with the result that achievement is not yet consistently good.
- There are too many inconsistencies in the rate of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 and some classes in Key Stage 2 particularly in reading.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not sufficiently high to bring about improvement in the lesson.
- Where teaching fails to engage pupils fully behaviour becomes restless with poor attitudes to learning.
- Teachers' marking does not always inform pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve their work to move on to the next steps in their learning.
- Subject leaders and those with whole school responsibilities are not yet secure in their knowledge and understanding of pupil assessment information.
- The school self-evaluation is not accurate in its judgements.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is visionary and has made a positive start to raising standards and school improvement.
- Pupils and parents and carers are very happy with the school.
- There is a strong emphasis on behaviour with the result that behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Governors are well informed and provide a good balance of support and challenge. They regularly check on how well the school is doing in helping pupils to make better progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons and observed the behaviour unit. Several were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Visits were made to each class with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with a representative of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence, including the school’s tracking of pupils’ progress, pupils’ work, and documents relating to safeguarding and special educational needs and the school’s view of its own performance.
- Inspectors visited the behaviour unit.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour in class, at break times and at other times around the school.
- Inspectors attended two assemblies.
- The views of 105 parents and carers, as recorded on Parent View (Ofsted’s online survey), were considered.

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Woodhouse	Additional Inspector
Kate Robertson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-size primary school.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2013.
- The school has a six place pupil support base on site
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is lower than average.
- The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than the national average. This is the additional funding for specific groups of pupils including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in English and mathematics to good and better, by ensuring that:
 - learning activities are well matched to pupils' abilities and there is better understanding of pupils' developmental needs, especially for the more-able pupils
 - the quality of reading and comprehension is improved across the school so that it is more in line with the recent better progress seen in writing, particularly that of the more-able pupils
 - marking is appropriate and rigorous and pupils are given more time in lessons to respond to teachers' comments and make improvements to their work.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - the school's self-evaluation provides a more accurate picture of the school's effectiveness
 - the roles of leaders and managers with whole-school responsibility are developed to know the strengths and weaknesses in their areas
 - leaders use progress information to quickly identify and intervene where pupils are underachieving
 - training opportunities are given to enhance the performance of leaders at all levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has been below that of pupils nationally for the past few years in Key Stage 2 and broadly in line with the national averages in Key Stage 1. Progress has not been rapid enough. It did improve slightly in 2012 and evidence seen shows it has improved more rapidly in 2013 to be in line with age-related expectations in English and mathematics. Pupils' books and school tracking show this improvement is set to continue.
- Few pupils make more than the expected level of progress. As a result, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2 and Level 5 at the end of Year 6 are below average. Some of the more-able pupils are not being challenged sufficiently and are not, therefore, reaching the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Not enough pupils make consistently good progress because class teachers do not regularly use information about pupils' progress to plan lessons, especially for the more-able pupils. In these classes attitudes to learning worsen and pupils become restless.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below average for their age. They make progress but leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels that are still below those typically expected nationally. However, recent tracking shows new children entering the school are typically at levels expected nationally and are leaving the Reception classes with good levels of development, especially boys.
- In Key stage 1 progress in reading and writing improved significantly in 2012 due to the teaching of the letters sounds make (phonics) and an emphasis on the enjoyment of books.
- In Key stage 2 progress is variable in English and mathematics between classes. By the end of the key stage it is approaching the progress pupils should make. However, progress in mathematics needs to be much quicker as it is still lags behind English especially at the higher levels. The school is aware of this and has put extra resources in place that are having an impact for English and mathematics.
- The extra funding (pupil premium) used to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is used by the school to provide additional activities and group sessions or one-to-one tuition. The progress of these pupils is variable across the school. In 2012, at the end of Year 6, they were about three terms behind their classmates in reading and writing four terms behind in mathematics. School tracking shows that in 2013 the gap has closed in mathematics and narrowed in reading and writing to one term behind. This trend is set to continue with the additional support that has recently put in place in Year 6.
- School tracking indicates that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and the pupils in the behaviour unit make good progress over time especially in the unit where pupils make accelerated progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language make better progress than their classmates. This demonstrates the leaders' determination to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and that there is no discrimination.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across the school. In some lessons teachers are not making the

work demanding enough because they have not carefully assessed what pupils already know before planning work.

- A marking policy has been introduced but pupils' books show that it has not been implemented consistently. Statements are unclear in explanation for pupils to understand how to improve their work.
- The use of teaching assistants is inconsistent. In classrooms often they are used to maintain behaviour. In group work outside classroom they enable pupils to make good progress because the teachers and teaching assistants are clear about what to do and how to do it.
- In the best lessons, adults are deployed well and support groups of pupils with success. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning to move pupils forward by reshaping tasks and explanations to improve learning. Activities are set to enable every pupil to move forward the correct amount of challenge. In these lessons pupils are motivated and attentive.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage good teaching ensures that children make good progress. Teachers help children develop language skills through carefully developed play opportunities. For example, when thinking of a leaf falling they moved to words like twirling and floating and later made a leaf man.
- In the pupil support base teaching is good with a good focus on practical activities. Sound teaching strategies are used with the result that pupils are able to return to mainstream classes where they are supported until they can manage alone.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- In some lessons, a minority of pupils are less focused and teachers have to frequently stop the lesson to refocus them. They lose interest because they find it hard to listen to others with the result that there is a loss of teaching time. However, in the best lessons pupils are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their work and achieve well.
- Discussions with pupils show they feel safe and understand different forms of bullying including internet safety. Bullying is rare and pupils say that if it happens, staff deal with it quickly. Pupils know they can talk to an adult. The school has a Sunshine Room which is often used to calm pupils who are finding it hard to conform, require quiet or find friends.
- Parents and carers spoken to, those who completed the online questionnaire, Parent View, and those who responded to the school's own questionnaire feel that their children are safe and happy at school and that standards of behaviour are good.
- Behaviour in public areas of the school and on entry to assembly is good. They enter the hall for assembly quietly and listen to the content well, whether it is staff or children. They are aware of each other's needs in the playground and manage their own behaviour well in the lunch hall.
- Behaviour management in the pupil support base is good. Strategies are appropriate to the needs of each individual pupil.
- The level of attendance has improved and is now above average. This is the result of a rigorous promotion of the importance of good attendance. Weekly trophies are given for the best class attendance and a surprise reward if a class receives it three times.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not brought about improvement in pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching fast enough. Some staff are not trained sufficiently to bring about change. The new headteacher is addressing this but has not been in post long enough to see the impact of this improvement. A link has already been made to local secondary schools to promote higher achievers and provide Year 6 with an easy transfer to the next stage of their education.
- The self-evaluation was completed prior to the current headteacher taking up post and is over generous. However, new strategies are in place, which correctly identify areas for improvement. Subject leaders, phase leaders and those with whole school responsibility have action plans that link to school improvement. Class teachers are being held to account for each pupil's progress in order to quickly identify underachievement and allow early interventions to be put in place.
- Additional sporting opportunities are being arranged which will demonstrate an effective use of the additional funding provided by the government to help children to be active and improve their fitness. For example a sports coach is to be employed and a variety of after school sporting opportunities for girls and boys.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An African drummer was employed for Black History Month to demonstrate ways of communicating over long distances. Pupils excitedly discussed a link to an Indian school using the internet. Pupils confidently discuss the features of their own faith to classmates in Religious Education.
- Management in the behaviour pupil support base is good. Rigorous records are well maintained with helpful reports for mainstream teachers. There are good links with outside agencies which support pupils' development, all of which contribute to the good progress made. The school is a link school for others on the management of pupil behaviour.
- The local authority has supported the school well. A specialist consultant has reinforced training for the Early Years Foundation Stage teachers' and staff's understanding of new initiatives. Help has been given to increase teachers' subject knowledge in English and mathematics and training given to the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body know the school well and have been associated with it for a number of years. They support the headteacher and senior leaders well. There is a secure understanding that the attainment of the pupils is not yet high enough and governors rightly identify that the more-able pupils do not progress as well as they should. Governors attend regular training. Governors employ local authority advisors when setting targets for the headteacher to improve the school. They understand how to set targets for teachers to improve their work and link improvement to pay rises. Pupil premium money is well used and monitored by a governors' committee. Finances are secure. Governors support the strong parents' association which has raised money to enhance playground equipment for both key stages.

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	117187
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	425251
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	370
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Morriss
Headteacher	Deena Chetty
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2011
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