

Great Bridge Primary School

Mount Street, Great Bridge, Tipton, DY4 7DE

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement has continued to improve since the previous inspection. All groups of pupils make good progress.
- Children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are low compared with those typical for their age but by the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of good teaching, excellent individual care, and a stimulating learning environment.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are confident to take risks to accelerate pupils' learning, and plan activities that inspire them and maintain their interest and curiosity.
- Marking and feedback given to pupils about their work is a clear strength of teaching. It is highly effective in challenging pupils to improve their work and make rapid progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They conduct themselves impeccably at all times and have great pride in their school.
- The school does an outstanding job of keeping its pupils safe. Bullying is largely unheard of and pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and to assess possible risks.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, supported by her senior team and the governing body, has ensured that the school shares a strong vision for improvement. Teaching and achievement are improving year on year.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always make sure that they have resources available to challenge pupils who make faster progress with their work.
- Sometimes, instructions given to pupils are too complicated, so they cannot get on with their learning quickly.
- Some activities do not involve all pupils directly in learning so that they lose focus and their progress slows.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, four of which were seen together with senior leaders. In addition, they made other short visits to lessons and to learning areas in the course of their observations of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of their teaching.
- Inspectors spoke informally to parents who were engaged in the community room, but there were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for these to be considered.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, representatives from the local authority, members of the governing body, senior and subject leaders and teaching staff.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, and looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data and monitoring of how well pupils are achieving. They also checked planning documents, records of checks on the quality of teaching, and records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Peter Lawley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. This additional government funding is to help pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of the pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above the national average.
- The school runs specially resourced provision for children with special educational needs to assess those of Nursery age who have severe disabilities and complex needs. Some children are assessed at age two in this 'focused provision'.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, 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 a greater proportion of lessons result in outstanding progress by ensuring that:
 - resources are always available to stretch pupils when they finish their work so that they do not wait for the next challenging task
 - all pupils are fully engaged in lesson activities that make demands on their thinking and challenge them to express their ideas
 - teachers' instructions are simple so that pupils clearly understand what they have to do and can quickly get on with their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has continued to improve since the previous inspection. All groups of pupils make at least good progress, from low starting points, leading to attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that is broadly average at the end of Year 6. This ensures that all pupils are well prepared to move onto secondary school.
- When children start in the Nursery, their skills and knowledge are generally low compared with what would normally be expected for their age. This is particularly true of their language skills. The school makes good one-to-one support available throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as a result, children make good progress both in language acquisition and in other aspects of their development.
- Pupils make good progress through Years 1 and 2 as a result of teaching that is generally well paced and pitched accurately to the ability levels of pupils. This good progress does not fully eradicate the effect of the pupils' low starting points and standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were well below national averages in 2013. The school sets ambitious targets for pupils and checks their progress carefully. Many pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are making accelerated progress as a result.
- Lessons in Key Stage 2 are brisk and interesting so that pupils make consistently good progress in their learning. The proportion of pupils who completed Year 6 in 2013 who made expected progress was above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own tracking data shows that pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are making even better progress.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in nearly all lessons because teachers pitch the difficulty of the work carefully to make sure they are challenged. Occasionally, they are made to wait too long for the next challenging task when they complete work.
- Effective use is made of pupil premium funding. For instance, a proportion of the funding is used to employ additional teachers in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6 and to provide small-group and one-to-one teaching in mathematics and writing. In 2013, those pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium finished year 6 almost a year behind other pupils in mathematics and reading and two terms behind in writing. The more focused teaching groups have improved pupils' progress so that gaps are now closing rapidly.
- Pupils' health and well-being are already benefiting from the primary school sport funding which was recently allocated to the school. For example, a whole-school cheer leading lesson ensured that all pupils were engaged in aerobic exercise in an activity that brought the school together.
- Across the school, staff are skilled at helping pupils who are learning English as an additional language to quickly extend their vocabulary and understanding so that they are able to apply these skills successfully when working on their own. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other pupils.
- As a result of effective systems to identify and meet pupils' needs, those who have disabilities and those with special educational needs make good progress. Excellent training of teaching assistants ensures that they challenge the pupils they work with to make the very best progress they can.

- Care and assessment procedures in the 'focused provision' for the assessment of Nursery aged children are good. During their time at the school, their basic skills are developed well and teachers make effective plans which help to improve learning in areas related to their particular special educational needs.
- Pupils are encouraged to read often and widely. They enjoy reading and those pupils heard reading in Year 2, including those who struggle the most, read with fluency and confidence and could predict what might happen next in the story.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- A key strength of teaching is the way that pupils' work is marked and the quality of feedback they receive. Teachers provide clear guidance about how pupils can improve their work which ensures that they are both praised and challenged to take their learning further. Excellent routines have been established for pupils to respond to marking and teachers check that any additional work has been completed. Pupils told inspectors that they appreciate their teachers comments and find the 'gap tasks' challenging and useful.
- In nearly all lessons, teachers plan activities that are well pitched to the ability levels of their pupils. As a result, pupils are able to make rapid progress. In a mathematics lesson, pupils made outstanding progress as a result of challenging tasks being set for each ability table, followed up by the pupils assessing their own and their friends' work. However, in some lessons, teachers do not always have resources on hand to further challenge pupils who have finished their work and they have to wait too long, which slows their progress.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils lead to a very positive learning environment. Teachers are not afraid to take risks, to step away from their planning when they recognise that pupils' learning can be accelerated or to stop and reshape tasks if the rate of learning slows. They plan interesting learning activities that pique pupils' interest and curiosity.
- Sometimes, teachers give instructions that are too complicated, or keep an activity going for too long so that pupils get bored when they are not directly involved. More often, teachers use questions to good effect in challenging pupils' understanding, waiting for answers, probing with follow-up questions and checking the progress of the class.
- The basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are taught well and pupils' literacy learning is very effectively embedded across all subjects so that they get opportunities to write at length about many different subjects. In an outstandingly well-taught Year 2 lesson, pupils were given three distinctly different tasks to develop their writing for a specific purpose. They made rapid progress from their starting points with challenge and support from the teacher and teaching assistants.
- In many lessons, it is difficult to discern which is the teacher and which is the teaching assistant because they work so well as a team and have a deep mutual understanding of the pupils' needs. Teaching assistants coach pupils rather than giving them too much help and as a result, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Children are well taught in the Nursery and Reception classes and in the 'focused provision'. Teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of the children and ensure their independence is

well developed by giving them choices in the activities they choose to learn from. Their work is often themed and the Chinese New Year was capturing their imagination during the inspection. One inspector was asked to choose from a menu while the 'waitress' wrote down his choices and he then enjoyed a meal of wool noodles.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In every aspect of their interactions with one another, with staff and with visitors, they display courtesy and kindness. The school's caring ethos and high expectations are reflected in pupils' extremely positive attitudes, leading to an exceptionally supportive learning environment.
- Pupils themselves feel that behaviour in the school is very good and parents agree. On the playground at lunchtime, pupils play positively together with music in the background that some children sing and dance along to. Playground 'buddies', wearing yellow caps, support lonely pupils and help to sort out any emerging conflict. The group or class of the week, awarded at 'praise assembly', get exclusive use of the football cage on Friday lunchtime and pupils enthusiastically compete for this reward. The assembly is a very positive and communal experience for pupils and they all support each other's successes.
- Pupils arrive punctually to lessons, are well equipped and ready to learn. They are smart in their uniforms and ensure that their exercise books are kept neat and tidy.
- The school works hard and successfully to put in place a well-ordered and calm environment to underpin achievement and promote pupils' well-being. Staff are well trained and continually coached to ensure that classroom management and communication for positive behaviour are consistent and effective. As a result, there are very few incidents of poor behaviour and there has been only one fixed term exclusion in nearly four years.
- Extensive support for parents to help them with strategies to manage their children's behaviour at home has been particularly successful. A number of parents have used these sessions as a springboard to engage with education, resulting in success in qualifications and offers of employment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have a good awareness of the different forms bullying can take and are taught how to keep themselves safe from these. Bullying is not considered by pupils or staff to be an issue at this school and the number of incidents is very low. The school's curriculum also includes many experiences that allow pupils to assess risks present in different situations and find out how to minimise their exposure to them.
- The school places a great emphasis on good attendance underpinning achievement and follows this up with clear and consistently applied guidelines for checking on attendance. As a result, levels of attendance have been consistently above average since the previous inspection.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school outstandingly well. She expects the very best from staff and pupils and has done much to improve the school during her headship. For example, the coaching programme for teachers is having a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and the

achievement of pupils.

- The school's senior leaders, subject leaders, and the Early Years Foundation Stage manager are highly effective in their roles. They monitor the progress of pupils rigorously and ensure that any pupils falling behind expectations are very quickly identified and helped to improve. The checks on the quality of teaching are searching and provide leaders with a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Best practice is shared at every opportunity. As a result of these well-targeted processes, teaching and learning are improving rapidly.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork among the staff and a desire to raise standards further. All staff understand the key priorities in the school and how they impact on pupils' achievement and life chances. Teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss their professional development and feel that the 'personal professional development' provided by the school is helping to improve their skills.
- Leadership and management of special educational needs provision, including for children assessed within the 'focused provision', is very strong. Procedures for checking pupils' progress and organising support that has a positive impact on progress are innovative and detailed.
- Teachers' performance is managed very effectively. The headteacher, supported by the governing body, has taken decisive action to eradicate weak teaching. Challenging targets are set for pupils' progress, and teachers work with leaders to assess their own development needs. Subject leaders and senior teachers have targets designed to improve their leadership skills, supported by training and coaching.
- The curriculum is well constructed and offers rich opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The focus weeks bring many external contributors into the school, for example, the 'world of work' week involved journalists, microbiologists and archaeologists in lessons throughout the week and pupils were asked to think about what it would be like to do that job.
- Senior leaders work extremely well with parents and carers. Case studies confirm that the work carried out with families has had a significant impact on the behaviour of individual pupils over time and has supported the most vulnerable pupils very effectively. In addition, family liaison work has given parents and carers opportunities to improve their own skills and access employment.
- The school has only recently received its first batch of primary school sport funding. It has joined with local schools to fund a specialist sports coach who offers high quality sports training to staff as well as additional sports clubs that are increasing pupils' participation in sport and exercise.
- The local authority has provided the school with good support over time, for example, by helping to improve the impact subject leaders have on the quality of teaching. The school is part of the Tipton Learning Community, which is a source of mutual leadership support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very knowledgeable and well informed in educational matters and has a very good awareness of how the pupils perform relative to their starting points and in relation to schools locally and nationally. They understand performance data which puts them in a strong position to challenge and support the school to improve. Governors are in school often and in lessons. They know the impact the pupil premium spending is having on the progress of eligible pupils and how leaders intend to improve pupil well-being through the primary school sport funding. Governors have supported the headteacher in making difficult staffing

decisions to eradicate weak teaching and they understand the link between the quality of teaching and movements on pay scales. They are committed to appointing the very best possible staff. The school budget is well managed within a challenging economic environment and a budget deficit has been eliminated in recent years. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current national requirements.

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	103915
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	440505

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	478
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Patel
Headteacher	Elizabeth Regan
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2012
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