

Moorcroft Wood Primary School

Bull Lane, Bilston, Walsall, WV14 8NE

Inspection dates

13–14 February 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and effective support by the senior leadership team along with their unremitting hard work have made this a good school where pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils achieve particularly well in reading and in the new spelling, punctuation and English grammar tests.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are keen to learn. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Attendance has improved and is above average because pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Teaching is continuously improving with at least half of it being outstanding.
- Parents and carers have high regard for the school's work and say they would recommend the school to another parent or carer.
- The curriculum gives pupils a wide range of opportunities to experience their learning beyond the classroom through the many trips that are offered.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors have good knowledge about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work well with the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching and achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding to enable more pupils to achieve the higher levels in mathematics and English.
- Mathematics is not taught and used enough in other subjects.
- It is too soon to see the impact of teachers' recent work on getting pupils to improve their writing in the different scenarios created for them.
- Teachers do not always give pupils sufficient time to respond to the comments from the marking.
- Middle leaders are at the early stages of learning about their roles and are not yet able to drive improvements in their areas sufficiently independently.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 parts of lessons, small-group work and a whole-school assembly. Three of the lessons were seen jointly with the headteacher and an acting assistant headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils reading in Years 1, 2 and 6.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documents including development plans, the school's evaluation of its performance, governing body minutes and documentation related to behaviour, child protection and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors met with pupils formally and informally around the school. Discussions were held with key staff, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day and looked at 28 responses from the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection the senior leadership has been restructured and there have been a few changes to the teaching staff.
- On the first afternoon of the inspection the whole school watched a pantomime version of Peter Pan.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is slightly above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is extra funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school manages its own breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding so that more pupils achieve the higher levels in mathematics and English by:
 - providing more opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects
 - building on the good start made by giving pupils more experiences and opportunities to write for real purposes so that they can continue to develop their reading and writing skills
 - ensuring that pupils are given time to respond to the comments made in marking.
- Strengthen the roles of the middle leaders so that they can be fully involved and independently monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are typically well below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress because adults interact well and effectively question children to promote their thinking, exploration and communication skills.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, in 2013, standards were broadly average as pupils make rapid gains in their learning. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are typically above average. Although there was a dip in 2013, those pupils made good progress from their starting points.
- There is still a legacy of underachievement that is filtering through the top end of Key Stage 2. School leaders are effectively addressing this in many ways. For example pupils in Year 5 are all given one-to-one or paired support by trainee teachers. This is helping them to make good progress and is a good example of how the school is helping to promote equality of opportunity for all its pupils.
- The special educational needs leader ensures that all teaching assistants who work closely with those pupils who are disabled and have special educational needs receive specialist training. As a result these pupils make at least good progress and often do better than their peers nationally.
- The funding for those eligible for the pupil premium funding is spent well. Part of it is used to subsidise the different trips and visits that help to widen pupils' knowledge beyond the school environment. This has contributed to closing the gaps between those eligible for the pupil premium funding and the others in the school. In the 2013 national tests those pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium funding did better than the others in the school in writing and mathematics. They were about one term behind the others in reading.
- The proportion of the more-able pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in the newly introduced English tests in 2013 was well above average. During the inspection, a group of talented pupils received a prestigious National Film Makers Award. This was because they created their own short, silent and impressive film. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics and reading was well below average.
- Reading is promoted well in all subjects. School leaders have created a new and stimulating library that is well used by pupils and the local community. It has recently started opening on a Saturday morning for the families in the local area. As a result pupils thoroughly enjoy reading for pleasure. Results from the phonics (sounds that letters make) screening check taken by the Year 1 pupils in 2013 were well above average.
- Improving writing is correctly one of the main priorities for the school. This priority is well threaded through all subjects. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills so that they can clearly articulate their ideas before writing them down.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics. This is because they are encouraged to make best use of the latest computer technology to develop their mental mathematics skills. Pupils learn how to understand the basic skills in mathematics through using stories and actions. However, mathematics is not threaded effectively through other subjects, as it is in English.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' specialist knowledge is used well to motivate pupils by giving them clear instructions and demonstrations. This was seen in an outstanding physical education lesson where the teacher's clear instructions and modelling enabled children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to make exceptional progress in travelling and controlling bats and balls.
- Teachers have high expectations about their pupils' achievements by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1. At the time of the inspection, pupils in a Year 2 mathematics lesson could confidently articulate how to solve tricky problems using vertical addition and subtraction. Pupils in Year 1 are successfully learning to add fractions through effective storytelling techniques.
- Teachers create different imaginative scenarios to stimulate pupils' ideas in order to develop

their writing skills. Effective examples include a scene where a soldier's bag was missing and one where one of the pupils' favourite chickens went missing. These techniques are starting to inspire pupils into producing high-quality writing but it is too soon to see the full results of this work.

- Teaching is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults consistently model and promote good speaking and listening skills. In the Nursery they make the best use of the outdoor area and of the weather to excite children's learning. For example, children were seen having lots of fun and laughter as they enjoyed and explored the rain using their umbrellas and waterproof coats.
- Teachers' thorough planning helps to create plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. For instance, pupils in a Year 6 lesson were given time to discuss the dilemma of whether the 'Lone Robot' should return to the forest or go to the factory.
- Teachers' marking is very detailed and gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work. However, pupils are not always given adequate time to respond and act on the advice given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils, staff and parents and carers agree that behaviour is good. Pupils are welcoming, friendly and courteous. They conduct themselves well around the school. They are independent and orderly. There is no litter and no coats or any clothing on the floor showing their respect for the school environment.
- Pupils play well together at break times. During wet playtimes behaviour is good. This is because there are established routines that pupils follow, such as knowing that they can use different forms of technology to challenge and occupy their thoughts.
- The atmosphere in the dining hall at lunchtimes is calm. Older pupils called 'Food Dudes' give out rewards to those who eat healthily and show good manners. The best class have the chance to have their lunch on the esteemed top table, which is a motivator.
- Pupils are very clear about the different behaviour systems that are in place. Documentation clearly shows that behaviour has significantly improved over time.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. This is reflected in the prompt and punctual starts to lessons by pupils. Behaviour is not outstanding because where teaching is weaker, on the odd occasion low-level interruptions affect the pace and flow of learning.
- Pupils in Year 6 are learning to build and develop their leadership skills well. This is because all of them relish having some form of responsibility in the school. For example, the chicken monitors say this is helping them to learn how to become dedicated and committed to their roles. Also it is helping them to have a good understanding on how to care for animals.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the different types of bullying. They feel safe and have confidence in all of the adults. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Relentless effort and initiatives such as employing a school and community engagement coordinator have helped to improve attendance. This is now above average showing that the school's methods are working and pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school.
- Breakfast club provides pupils with a healthy and settled start to the school day.

The leadership and management are good

- The exceptional leadership by the headteacher shows commitment to continuously driving improvements and developing the skills of other leaders. He is fully supported by an able and competent senior leadership team. Together they have quickly improved the quality of teaching and levels of pupils' achievement. The leaders have good capacity to make further improvements.

- Leaders are effectively encouraging all pupils to have high aspirations. For example all pupils will have visited a university by the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 2. All the classes are named after a university. Pupils are very proud of their class names.
- Every member of staff has challenging targets that are linked to pupils' performance, the school improvement plan and to standards that are expected of teachers nationally. These are reviewed and updated regularly. All are given quality professional support so they can be effective in their roles in improving pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders have rigorous and robust systems in place to monitor the quality of teaching. Teachers have good opportunities to observe each other's teaching and see good practice in other schools. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated.
- The middle leaders are given good opportunities to work alongside the senior leaders when they are undertaking their monitoring roles. However, they are still in the early stages of learning how to do this, so it too soon to see the full impact of their work.
- The school's curriculum effectively provides pupils with a wide range of experiences beyond their local environment and actively promotes their communication skills. For example the whole school visited the seaside in Llandudno and were able to discuss and write about their exciting experiences. Pupils say that their visit to Sherwood Forest where they built dens made their learning exciting.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For instance school leaders hired the Town Hall in Darlaston where all pupils performed an end of year Christmas extravaganza which was supported by the Jaguar Land Rover Brass Band. Pupils participate in an annual music festival hosted by the school called 'Moorcroft in the Park'. They are knowledgeable about different cultures and religions. Pupils have adopted a meerkat and have started their own enterprise so that they can visit it.
- The school is making good use of the sports funding by providing an outstanding specialist teacher for physical education. New kit has been purchased to enable all pupils to take part in a range of high-quality lessons. Pupils decide on the different after-school clubs that take place. As a result there has been an increase in the take-up of the additional activities. More pupils are now taking swimming lessons and as a result can now swim better.
- The school has established very strong relationships with the parents and carers. They say, 'I could not ask for a better set of staff' and 'My children are very happy to come to school.'
- The local authority provides light touch support as the school no longer needs as much input since becoming good school.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination in any form.

■ **The governance of the school:**

There have been many changes to the membership of the governing body since the previous inspection and it has been reconstituted. All new members have had the relevant training and carry out their roles and responsibilities well. The governing body strongly believes in succession planning and growing its own leaders. The new Chair of the Governing Body was formerly the vice chair and shadowed and trained to become the Chair while the former Chair was still in post. This is now repeated with the current vice chair. The governing body has completed a skills audit of all of its members and has used the results of this to allocate their different roles and responsibilities.

- All governors have received the necessary training needed to carry out their duties. They have an in-depth knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is because they have a good understanding of the school's data and seek external validation. Governors regularly visit to monitor the school's work. Pupils get to know the governors well. Governors encourage pupils to work hard by rewarding them with a sticker if they are trying hard. Governors provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. They know and understand how the extra funding for the pupil premium and sports is spent and can explain its impact. Governors are involved in the final decision on how to reward good teaching and have a clear understanding of how the progression in teachers' salary is linked to their performance.

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	135016
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	431691

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Annette Duckworth
Headteacher	Andy Nicholls
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 October 2012
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