

# Birds Bush Primary School

Birds Bush Road, Belgrave, Tamworth, B77 2NE

**Inspection dates** 3–4 June 2014

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

- Pupils' progress has been inconsistent. They are not making sufficiently rapid progress in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Teachers' expectations are sometimes not high enough and pupils are not always clear about the quality of work expected of them, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Marking of pupils' work is not always precise and pupils are not urged to act upon their teacher's comments to improve their work.
- There is insufficient checking of the effectiveness of teaching assistants in supporting pupils' progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive.
- Leaders have not responded quickly and effectively when weaknesses in teaching have emerged in the past.
- Teachers with specific responsibilities are not equipping staff with the skills needed to drive improvement for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs.
- When planning for improvement, leaders and managers do not include precise enough detail to help them measure whether their actions have been successful or not.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are now making good progress in writing.
- Pupils say they enjoy school and they feel safe in school. Attendance is above average.
- Behaviour in class is generally good, as is the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- The headteacher has developed a strong sense of purpose amongst staff and governors and has taken action to bring about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a strong start and make good progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, of which 3 were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, two groups of pupils and two members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, and the school's own survey of parents. Inspectors had conversations with parents and carers as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 31 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- School documentation was examined, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to teachers' performance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tracy Stone

Additional Inspector

Richard Johnson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Birds Bush Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is a one and a half-form entry school with two classes in each year group from Nursery to Year 6.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in a separate Nursery unit and a double Reception class. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught in three mix aged classes. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught in three mixed age classes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught English and mathematics in four single age groups every morning and in three mixed age classes each afternoon.
- Pupils come from predominantly White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding allocated by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those looked after by the local authority) is average.
- Birds Bush Primary School meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In May 2014, the governors appointed a new deputy headteacher, and a new leader for upper Key Stage 2. Currently, three classes are taught by teachers on temporary contracts. Three new teachers will take up appointments from September 2014.
- The school is supported by a local leader of education.
- There is a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body and formed part of this inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in reading and mathematics, so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
  - expectations of the standards of pupils' work in reading and mathematics are raised, particularly for pupils with below average attainment
  - pupils are clear about the quality of presentation and handwriting that is expected of them
  - marking is accurate and focused on what pupils have to do to improve their work, particularly in writing and mathematics
  - enough time is provided for pupils to respond to teachers' written comments, in both writing and mathematics
  - there are more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in different subjects
  - the progress of those pupils working with teaching assistants is checked rigorously
  - pupils' positive attitudes to learning are encouraged to ensure that behaviour is good.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by making sure that:
  - leaders and managers respond quickly and effectively when weaknesses in teaching emerge
  - teachers with responsibilities effectively use mentoring and coaching for staff to drive improvement for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, to ensure that none are falling behind
  - measures used to judge success of planned actions are sharply linked to rates of pupils' learning and progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement as pupils' progress has been inconsistent, reflecting the quality of teaching.
- Standards at Key Stage 1 are improving. From a dip in 2011, standards in reading, writing and mathematics picked up so that by 2013 they were broadly average in writing and above average in mathematics. However, in reading too few pupils reached the higher levels of attainment. School records and inspection evidence show that pupils are now reading well and more pupils are set to attain the higher standards in reading at the end of Year 2 in 2014.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were below average in 2013. Those pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2013 started Key Stage 2 with standards that were broadly average. They made expected progress in writing to reach average standards, but with weaknesses in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Standards in reading and mathematics were below average because of the slow progress made by some pupils, particularly those with below average attainment.
- School records and inspection evidence suggest that standards at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are set to improve in 2014. It is clear that better progress is being made in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- More-able pupils achieved well in writing in 2013 but made slower progress in reading and mathematics. They are now attaining the same standards, and make the same progress, as similar pupils nationally. The school is providing these pupils with additional support in gifted and talented groups and they are currently making good progress.
- Most children start school with skills that are below those that are typical for their age. For some the skills of mathematics and literacy are particularly low. The Nursery and Reception Year classroom and outside learning areas provide children with stimulating environments in which to learn. Children work well together and enjoy their learning. They are well prepared to begin their work in Key Stage 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of others. Although there is good identification of their specific needs, leaders and managers responsible for pupils with special educational needs are not yet using data rigorously to check the progress made by these pupils.
- The progress made by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the pupil premium is similar to that of others. In 2013 these pupils were nearly one year behind others in reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. They did as well as others in mathematics. Improved provision for these pupils and better analysis of their progress is leading to a closing of the gap between these and other pupils.
- Pupils enjoy reading, especially the new books the school has purchased. The most recent screening check at the end of Year 1 showed that pupils' skills in linking letters to sounds to read are close to the national average. Those pupils who were below average in Year 1 in 2012 exceeded the success rate of their peers nationally when they retook the check in 2013. Pupils take books home to read and many are keen to read with their parents. Parents make a good contribution to the development of reading. Many listen to their children read regularly and complete their child's reading record in detail. Achievement in reading is good across the school.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as it is not consistently good throughout the school and, as a result, pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 1 and in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2 is not good.
- Expectations of pupils' mathematical skills are not consistently high enough. Consequently, the quality of pupils' work in calculation and problem solving is variable and they are not challenged well enough to help them make good progress.
- Although pupils' work is marked regularly and suggestions for improvement are made, some teachers do not ensure that pupils have the opportunity to learn from or respond to their comments. This leaves pupils repeating mistakes in mathematics, for example, and not progressing well with their work.
- The work of teaching assistants is not checked rigorously enough to ensure that the work is challenging enough for all pupils and that they are making good progress. Teaching assistants are not always managed well enough in lessons to ensure that pupils benefit from their skills.
- In a few lessons, some pupils occasionally lose interest in the work and are not always brought back swiftly to their tasks. This impedes the progress they are making.
- An analysis of pupils' work shows that there are too few opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects. Scrutiny of exercise books and work done in class also shows that some pupils were not challenged sufficiently to improve their work, especially when the quality of writing, handwriting and presentation was not good.
- Where teaching has improved and learning is now good, pupils maintain interest throughout the whole of the lesson. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed retelling a complex story from Egyptian mythology. They wrote detailed notes about the main events before constructing sentences, based on the teacher's expert modelling. Throughout the lesson they were questioned well and challenged effectively to improve their writing. All pupils made good progress.
- When learning is good, pupils are clear about what they are expected to do and to what standard. The work set is closely matched to pupils' abilities and is checked regularly to ensure that it is getting the best out of them. A good example was seen in Year 6 mathematics where pupils were using written information to work out numerical solutions and solve problems with different levels of difficulty.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, and occasionally outstanding. Tasks are well structured and interesting. Activities fully use the wide range of resources and contribute positively to children's development in all areas of learning. Very effective teaching and the close, individual support children receive in class and in small groups, have a very positive impact on learning and their personal development.
- Homework makes a good contribution to learning. For example, the weekly mathematics problems are completed well by all pupils. The homework is used to check pupils' calculation skills and to make a focused start for subsequent lessons. Parents are supportive of these regular homework tasks.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not consistently positive. When teaching is not good some pupils lose concentration and have to be prompted too often to focus on their work.
- When teaching is not good, pupils lose interest and progress slows. Pupils do not always take care with their handwriting and this leads to their written work being poorly presented.
- Around the school, most pupils are well behaved as they know what is expected of them. They are polite and treat each other with courtesy and respect. Displays of work in corridors and classrooms are treated with great respect.
- Pupils are proud of their school and wear their uniform with pride. There is no litter around school. Some pupils told inspectors that they appreciate how clean the school is kept for them.
- Pupils generally get on well together at lunchtimes and playtimes. They 'let off steam' in the playgrounds, are very active in their play and use the equipment provided for them well.
- Parents expressed positive views about the behaviour of pupils, and comment that this is particularly good at the start and end of the school day. Staff are also highly positive about pupils' behaviour. They felt that behaviour had improved steadily since the last inspection.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and staff are very confident that their children are safe at school.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and that bullying is rare. They are confident that, when bullying is reported, the school takes swift action. They have a good understanding of internet safety and know what to do should there be any cyber-bullying or communications from unknown people.
- The school educates pupils well in assessing risk. The school curriculum ensures that pupils have a clear understanding of road safety, cycling proficiency and internet safety.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills in a safe and stimulating environment, both at the beginning and end of the school day, in the breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school has refurbished its environment to improve safety for its pupils further.
- Attendance is above average. Almost all pupils attend school regularly.

**The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not responded quickly and effectively when weaknesses in teaching have emerged in the past. This has led to some pupils not making adequate progress, and too few making more than expected progress.
- Some of the actions taken by leaders have not been fully effective in ensuring that all pupils are achieving well. Measures used to evaluate the success of these actions are not always sharply linked to the pupils' achievement or the quality of teaching.

- Teachers with subject or other responsibilities are not yet in a position to bring about improvements. Opportunities to mentor and coach staff to ensure that good progress is being made by all pupils and that the quality of teaching and support by teaching assistants in their area are not yet fully apparent in driving up standards. As teachers' expectations of some groups of pupils are not high enough, the school is not yet fulfilling its commitment to equality of opportunity for all.
- The headteacher and the governing body have developed a strong sense of purpose among all of the staff and parents. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They are hugely ambitious on the part of all pupils in the school.
- The headteacher knows the school well. There are clear systems for self-evaluation and improvement of the school's work. Staff are supportive of this and standards have improved, particularly in reading. Tasks set by teachers are now more interesting and give learning a purpose.
- The headteacher has recently changed the roles of some leaders to drive up standards, especially in mathematics and for the less able. She, and the governors, have strengthened the leadership team through new appointments. These recent changes to leadership and management are supporting greater capacity for the school to improve further.
- Systems to check the performance of teachers are effective. As the result of the strengthening of checks on the quality of teaching, the headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and is using a good range of professional development to improve it further.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of activities, including French and a good number of school clubs such as Lego and arts and crafts. Pupils take part in competitive activities and were proud that they were well placed in the local tournaments in spelling and mathematics. These activities and the impressive displays of pupils' work around the school contribute well to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The additional money provided to improve sporting opportunities is being used effectively. The school is using the expertise of sports coaches and has organised additional competitions that has attracted increased participation. Pupils speak positively about the range of sporting opportunities available to them such as gymnastics and dance.
- Parents are very positive about leadership in the school. They say the school responds well to their concerns. They say teaching is now better and are confident that the school is improving.
- Since October 2012, the local authority has provided effective support for the school to improve. It has successfully helped address weaker teaching and provided support for literacy and numeracy. It has funded a local leader of education to support leadership and management and this has had a positive impact.
- The skills and expertise of the headteacher and some other senior staff are used in the network of local schools to support other colleagues through sharing best practice and as part of the training of new teachers from local universities. Senior staff moderate standards across the network, for example, by checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments of children's work in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Since the last inspection there have been many changes to the membership of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors. Governors know the school exceptionally well and have a very good understanding of how well it is doing. They visit the school to see the work of the pupils and teachers and to check data. They have formed a core group to link with the headteacher, teachers with specific responsibilities, the local leader of education and the local authority to gather information to plan for improvement. Governors robustly challenge and support the headteacher to improve pupils' progress. Governors check the school's budget and have approved the use of pupil premium funding in the light of actions that are in place to improve standards. Governors understand the arrangements linking teachers' performance to pay. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124170
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442597

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve O'Brien
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Barnes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01827 475170
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