

# County Bridge Primary School

Anson Road, Walsall, WS2 0DH

## Inspection dates

15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not good. Standards are below average in Key Stage 1, including in reading and writing.
- In spite of recent improvements in Nursery and in Reception, children join Year 1 with some weaknesses in their skills in reading, writing and communication.
- Gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates have not closed quickly enough.
- Smaller proportions of pupils than average are working at the higher levels across the school. Teachers sometimes do not have high enough expectations of most-able pupils. Teachers do not always build on pupils' skills well enough and use questioning to move learning forward.
- Some weaknesses in teaching, including support from teaching assistants and the use of marking, hold back pupils' progress.
- Attendance is below average.
- Some key leadership roles are underdeveloped.
- The governing body has not, following its external review, implemented in full the required action plan. It does not fulfil its statutory responsibility for ensuring the school's website contains all the required information for parents and other users.
- The headteacher has taken timely, robust and effective actions to tackle underperformance in teaching and achievement. However, neither of these aspects has improved sufficiently to be judged good.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' achievement across the school is starting to improve. This is as a result of better teaching and more frequent reviews of pupils' progress.
- Pupils are proud of their school and want to do well. Their good behaviour in lessons and around school, and positive attitudes support their learning well.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The headteacher is having success in ensuring that teachers take more responsibility for pupils' progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups through visits to classrooms to check on pupils' learning. All teachers were seen teaching. On a few visits, inspectors were accompanied by the headteacher.
- A range of pupils were heard reading.
- Samples of Key Stage 2 pupils' work in writing and mathematics were looked at.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 27 questionnaires completed by staff and the 11 responses made by parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire Parent View. An inspector spoke informally to a few parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants' reports including external reviews of governance and the school's use of pupil premium funding; the school improvement plan; the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practices relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2013. The assistant headteacher joined the school in January 2014. Two members of the senior leadership team left the school in the last school year.
- Six new teachers joined the staff in September 2014 including four colleagues new to teaching.
- Almost three quarters of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remaining pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with pupils of White and Black Caribbean, and Indian origin forming the largest groupings. A very few pupils in Nursery and Reception are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion who are supported through school action plus, or through a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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

- Improve teaching to at least good, and increase the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels by ensuring that all teachers:
  - focus lesson activities more sharply on developing pupils' skills
  - use pupils' responses to their questions to better assess pupils' understanding
  - establish consistently effective partnerships with teaching assistants to monitor and to support pupils' learning
  - use marking well to tackle pupils' misconceptions and to provide pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve their work
  - always provide the most-able pupils with work that challenges them.
- Raise achievement, especially in early years and Key Stage 1, by ensuring that:
  - teaching fully engages all children and enables them to apply their speaking skills confidently
  - children have better opportunities to extend their skills in the main outdoor area
  - the new phonics (letters and sounds) programme is swiftly established
  - pupils have more opportunities to write in depth and to develop their understanding of non-fiction texts
  - the findings of the very recent review of pupil premium funding are acted upon swiftly.
- Improve attendance so that it is in line with the national average by July 2015 by strengthening the school's work with parents.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - the roles of leaders are fully developed so that all can make a strong contribution to checking the school's work and to driving improvement
  - governors rapidly implement their required action plan in full
  - governors ensure the school's website provides all the necessary information for parents and other users to meet statutory requirements.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Several well-considered actions taken by senior leaders to raise achievement are not yet fully effective in enabling rapid improvements to be made in all areas of the school's work. Due to discontinuity in staffing, temporary arrangements have had to be put in place to cover some key leadership posts. This includes that for the coordination of special educational needs provision. Moreover, these roles are not yet fully developed.
- The school is in the early stages of working towards full implementation of its preferred approach to assessment following removal of National Curriculum levels.
- The use of additional funding has not led to gaps being closed quickly enough for disadvantaged pupils compared with other pupils. The school commissioned an external review of its provision for eligible pupils, but as this report was only received very recently, senior leaders have not had time to act upon its findings.
- The new headteacher has wasted no time in tackling weaknesses in leadership and teaching. Robust actions were taken to tackle underperformance and to set higher expectations for staff. The headteacher has ensured that pupils' assessments are moderated externally to set clear benchmarks for measuring pupils' progress.
- The headteacher has implemented a new, well-organised tracking system and frequent assessment meetings. This has enabled teachers to review their pupils' performance and to plan effective support programmes for those who are in danger of falling behind or who could be stretched further. These actions proved particularly successful in improving Year 6 pupils' performance last year.
- The school ensures that there is no discrimination and promotes equal opportunities adequately. Relationships between pupils of minority ethnic backgrounds are harmonious and the school's strong partnerships with a range of external agencies support pupils' well-being in school. Parents' confidence in the school is growing as leaders are starting to implement new initiatives, such as workshops, to involve parents more closely in their children's education.
- The school's curriculum is broad and mostly well balanced, although some elements such as phonics are in the early stages of development. Themes explored in lessons, such as making the right choices with money, a wide range of sporting and musical enrichment activities and other initiatives, foster pupils' moral, social and cultural education well. They also deepen pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain.
- The physical education and sports premium has been spent appropriately. These monies have been used, for example, to widen the range of sports available to pupils and to increase participation rates. Currently these clubs are fully subscribed but leaders have not yet evaluated the impact of this expenditure on pupils' skill levels or on teaching.
- The local authority provides the school with much useful support and helpful advice, for example through its regular reviews of the school's performance. Consultants also help in moderating the school's assessments on pupils' achievements and in improving the quality of provision in Nursery and Reception.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors rightly recognised that they needed to improve their effectiveness. They are now considerably more knowledgeable about the school's overall performance than at the time of the previous inspection, through, for example, their attendance at termly improvement group meetings with local authority personnel. This has helped them to become more confident in holding senior leaders to account.
  - Governors are well aware of the school's key priorities, the skills that pupils need to improve upon and have spent wisely to improve much of the environment and resources in the early years provision. They know about the strategies used to support disadvantaged pupils, but are less sure about their impact for eligible pupils.
  - Governors have a realistic view of the quality of teaching and the challenges the headteacher has faced in seeking to improve it. They are becoming increasingly involved in managing staff performance, including the work of the headteacher.
  - Governors undertook last year the review of governance recommended at the previous inspection. They have conducted a skills audit of governors' expertise but have not yet implemented the required action plan in full to help them to plan strategically for their further improvement.
  - Governors make sure that current government requirements for safeguarding are met and are effective.
  - Governors have not made sure that the school's website contains all the necessary information for parents and other users to meet statutory requirements.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Routines and good relationships in lessons in Years 1 to 6 are well established. Nearly all pupils manage their behaviour well, requiring little direction from staff in lessons.
- Most pupils' enthusiasm, willingness to please and pride in their work enhance their learning and progress in lessons. This is particularly evident when they are captivated by the teaching. However, a few pupils lack confidence, are less responsive than their peers and their concentration drops occasionally.
- Behaviour around school and in the playground is also good. Key Stage 1 pupils behave sensibly in the dinner hall, are friendly to visitors and are keen to talk about their lives in school. Older pupils show courtesy in corridors, willingly open doors and show kindness to each other and to adults. Pupils respond quickly to staff's instructions in classrooms and outdoors.
- There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years and few short-term exclusions. Most parents believe rightly that pupils' behaviour is well managed. The school's behaviour policy is based on praise and recognition for the things that pupils do well and is implemented consistently by staff.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare and all members of the school community, including parents, feel that any such incidents are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Pupils say that 'no-one is perfect but people at this school are kind' and that if there are any incidents of low-level disruption in lessons, these are sorted out by staff. Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to ensure it is kept tidy.
- Improved systems and strategies led to a small rise in attendance last year and a reduction in the number of persistent absentees. Absences are investigated rigorously and careful checks are made to ensure that the destination of pupils who leave the school is firmly established before they are removed from the school's roll. However, the annual rate of attendance, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, remains below average.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school works hard to ensure pupils have the information and understanding that they need to keep themselves safe in potentially dangerous situations such as near busy roads, around strangers or when using the internet. All necessary risk assessments are in place for the activities pupils undertake.
- Incidents of dangerous, violent or racist behaviour are rare and are logged and shared with the local authority as required. The school is well aware of its responsibilities to be vigilant against extremist and homophobic behaviours. Opportunities are planned in the curriculum to ensure that these issues are discussed and threats minimised.
- Pupils feel safe in school and trust the staff to look after them well. They report that they could approach any one of the staff, secure in the knowledge that they would help them to sort out any problems.
- There is a link governor to support the staff with any child protection issues. Staff are well trained in this area, know the school's families well and maintain strong links with outside agencies and the local Sure Start Centre to ensure pupils' well-being in school. Staff maintain a 'concerns book' to enable them to acquire an informed picture of issues which might affect pupils in their classes.

## The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Previous weaknesses in teaching meant that a large number of pupils did not develop their command of literacy and numeracy skills securely. Some traces of these weaknesses remain.
- Teachers usually provide pupils with activities that they enjoy. However, they do not always ensure that these build continually on what pupils have learned, or are precisely focused on the skills pupils need to acquire next. Although teachers give clear explanations, they sometimes make limited use of pupils' responses to their questions to assess pupils' understanding before moving on with new learning. Marking is not always focused sharply enough on correcting pupils' misconceptions or in providing pupils with clear guidance for improvement. These weaknesses prevent pupils from developing their knowledge and skills at a fast rate.
- Teachers do not consistently show that they have high enough expectations for what the most-able pupils can achieve. Not all tasks provide them with the scope to think hard and to make rapid progress.
- Fully effective working partnerships between new teachers and teaching assistants are not yet established. Consequently, in some lessons teaching assistants play a largely passive role or are not deployed skilfully enough. This limits how well they are able to monitor and support pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- While the quality of teaching remains too variable to enable pupils to make consistently good progress, robust actions taken by senior leaders show their capacity to improve teaching. Currently, pupils' achievement is improving because of better teaching.

- More effective monitoring of pupils' work, as shown for example in Year 6, is enabling pupils to use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately. There are encouraging signs in Years 4 and 6 that pupils are being trained effectively to write for a range of different purposes and to improve their calculation skills in mathematics.

### **The achievement of pupils** requires improvement

- Due to previous underachievement in early years, pupils' attainment when they join Year 1 has been below average in the last two years. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment remains below average as shown by provisional results for Year 2 pupils in 2014. Very few pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Weaknesses in Key Stage 1 pupils' communication skills, especially in Year 1, have not been tackled effectively enough to close gaps with national standards, in spite of the good progress made by Year 2 pupils last year. Recognising this shortfall, senior leaders have introduced a planned programme this term for improving pupils' skills in phonics (the sounds that letters make). Results in the phonics screening check are broadly average over time.
- Year 2 pupils read accurately as they know how to break down unknown words to help them read them. Their understanding of the meaning of words in non-fiction texts which go beyond their everyday experience is sometimes limited.
- The most-able pupils do not consistently do as well as they should, especially in the younger age groups. Below average proportions of pupils are also working at the higher levels in Key Stage 2. This was reflected in Year 6 pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics in 2013. In lessons, the most able do not always seek to challenge themselves, sometimes being content to practise methods that they have already mastered rather than attempting more complex tasks.
- Attainment and progress are variable in Years 3 to 5, partly as a result of discontinuity in staffing. Attainment at the end of Year 6 rose in 2012 and 2013 when pupils' attainment was broadly average. Provisional results for Year 6 pupils in 2014 show a further rise in attainment as pupils achieved well in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that a combination of good teaching and highly successful support programmes enabled these pupils, including the most able, to make rapid progress last year, especially in writing and in mathematics.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve at least as well as their White British classmates. In 2013, nearly all of these pupils in Year 6 made the progress expected of them over Key Stage 2.
- In the 2013 end of Key Stage 2 tests, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was above their classmates. They were working in line with other pupils nationally in reading and writing but were about two terms behind in mathematics. Although the progress of disadvantaged pupils is currently broadly similar in other year groups to that of their classmates, it is not rapid enough to enable them to close gaps in attainment quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve in line with their classmates. Improved whole-school tracking and assessment procedures are now helping staff to step in earlier to improve their rates of progress.

### **The early years provision** requires improvement

- The school's records show that most children's skills and aptitudes when they join Nursery are below those typical for their age, especially in literacy and in their personal and social development. A large proportion of children also join the Reception class in September with varied amounts of pre-school experience and levels of skills below those of their classmates.
- Improvements in provision resulted in 40% of children achieving a good level of development in 2014. While this is still below the national average, it represents a marked improvement on the previous year. Disadvantaged children performed less well than their classmates and boys less well than girls.
- While children, even at this early stage in the school year, have learned to accept and respect classroom routines, some children have not yet developed the habits of concentration and good listening. Teaching occasionally betrays the inexperience of some of the practitioners. It sometimes lacks sufficient variety to enthuse and to challenge children and to ensure that they remain fully on task, during teacher-led activities indoors.
- Senior leaders have taken swift actions to tackle the safety concerns in the small courtyard area outlined during the last Ofsted monitoring visit in June 2013. They have transformed the space and have provided children with some useful resources to help them to practise new learning. The larger outdoor area, however, provides few opportunities for children to extend their skills and to apply new learning in other contexts.
- Substantial improvements to the indoor area have ensured that children have plenty of exciting resources to

occupy them during play-based activities. Children's speaking skills are not consistently well developed. They are not always able to describe new experiences or to share new learning with their classmates. This weakness sometimes slows children's progress during the activities they initiate for themselves.

- The assistant headteacher is guiding and supporting her new colleagues effectively in the development of their practice, including their use of assessment. She is fully aware of the improvements needed and has sensible plans in place to carry them out.

## 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>	104189
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	448968

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>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Roy Duckers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rabia Patel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11–12 December 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 720718
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