

# Bedford Primary School

Quarry Road, Bootle, L20 9LJ

**Inspection dates** 25–26 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Over time, pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and writing have declined. Although, senior leaders have managed to halt and reverse this underperformance, pupils' progress is not yet consistently good, particularly in mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Sometimes teachers ask undemanding questions or set work that is too easy and as a result, pupils do not always achieve as well as they might. This is particularly the case for middle ability pupils.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to solve challenging problems across the curriculum
- Senior leaders do not always evaluate the effectiveness of the actions they are taking to improve the school with enough rigour.
- Senior leaders do not use all of the data available to them to set challenging targets for the different groups of pupils in the school.
- The early years provision requires improvement because a minority of children are not ready for Key Stage 1 at the end of the Reception Year.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are unfailingly well mannered and polite.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are strong. Consequently, the school is a calm and orderly place of learning.
- Senior leaders are taking effective action to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- Pupils who receive part or all of their education away from the main school and pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- Senior leaders are taking effective action to accelerate pupils' progress in writing.
- Senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing and are taking effective action to improve the quality of teaching and improve pupils' outcomes, particularly in writing.
- Reading is taught well. As a result, pupils' achievement is good in this subject.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teachers at work in a range of classes across all key stages. They also scrutinised the work in pupils’ books. This afforded them the opportunity to evaluate the quality of teachers’ marking and the progress pupils are making, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Inspectors held meetings with two governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, two representatives of Sefton local authority, senior leaders, phase leaders and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors also held discussions with two groups of pupils and had conversations with pupils at breaks and lunchtimes.
- One inspector heard two groups of pupils read, one group from Year 2 and the other from Year 6. The inspector also took the opportunity to ask the pupils about their reading habits.
- Inspectors took into account opinions expressed by the 18 respondents to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View, the school’s own survey of parents’ attitudes to the school and the 24 responses to Ofsted’s staff questionnaire, in arriving at their judgements.
- Inspectors observed various facets of the school’s work and considered a number of documents. These included the school’s data on pupils’ attainment and progress, senior leaders’ records of the monitoring of teaching, senior leaders evaluation of how well the school is doing and the school improvement plan. Inspectors also considered the school’s records of behaviour and attendance and policies relating to teachers’ performance management and how the school makes sure that pupils are kept safe and secure.
- Inspectors also held conversations with a number of parents as they arrived at school with their children.

## Inspection team

Charles Lowry, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Claire Brown	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bedford is an above average sized primary school in the Bootle area of Liverpool, about three miles north of Liverpool City centre.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (extra funding the school receives to help with the education of pupils who are eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is more than twice the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average.
- Almost all pupils are educated on the school site. However, a few pupils receive all or part of their education at the local authority's 'Jigsaw' pupil referral unit.
- An above average number of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the start or end of a key stage.
- The school is the holder of a number of awards; these include the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark, Espresso Education Ambassador School status and is a silver champion of the Pearson Bug Club.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2014. The floor standards are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school so that it is at least consistently good, by:
  - raising teachers' expectations of what the different groups of pupils in the class can achieve, particularly those of middle ability, ensuring that activities provide a suitable degree of challenge so that pupils deepen their understanding
  - ensuring that pupils are given more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems set in different contexts and in a range of subjects
  - making sure that writing tasks set for pupils in the Reception year are suitably challenging
  - improving teachers' questioning techniques so that pupils are made to think hard about their learning, aiding the development of their higher order thinking skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that actions taken to improve the school are rigorously evaluated to determine, quickly, whether they are having the desired impact
  - sharpening the use of all the available data on the school's performance to set challenging targets for pupils and raise expectations of what they can achieve.
- Improve pupils' progress in mathematics so that it meets, at least, the government's minimum expectations for pupils' performance in this subject.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders are effectively tackling long-term deficiencies in the quality of teaching of mathematics and writing. However, although improving, teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- Senior leaders and governors have strived to establish a caring community free from discrimination where pupils and staff feel valued and cared for. However, they have not always successfully conveyed high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is a result of senior leaders not taking enough account of nationally available data to set pupils challenging targets.
- Over time, senior leaders' work to promote equal opportunities has been hindered by the wide gaps in attainment and progress between the different groups of pupils in the school, for example pupils of middle ability and disadvantaged pupils. However, the sharper focus that senior leaders have brought to the monitoring of pupils' progress is enabling them to identify, quickly, which pupils are falling behind and put in place extra help to get them back on track. This earlier support and improvements in the quality of teaching are beginning to close the attainment gaps for example between disadvantaged pupils and their other pupils with similar starting points.
- At the start of the academic year, the headteacher restructured the senior and middle leadership teams after a period of unavoidable turbulence in staffing. This has brought much needed clarity to the roles of each team member and ensured that management responsibilities are shared between them. This has led to more efficient use of time and a clearer focus on the work that needs to be done to improve the school.
- Senior and middle leaders regularly monitor the quality of teaching, using a range of evidence, including observing teaching, work scrutiny and analysis of pupils' progress data to determine the quality of classroom practice. However, they place too much emphasis on what the teacher is doing and not enough on the impact that teaching is having on pupils' progress. Consequently, they do not give enough consideration to evaluating teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Nevertheless, senior leaders recognise this and it continues to be a focus for school improvement.
- Governors have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with a range of learning experiences. These are further enriched by visits to places of worship, celebrations of major cultural events, for example the Chinese New Year and research into Spanish festivals. Taken alongside pupils' involvement in charity work and their participation in determining school policy, for example in relation to behaviour, the curriculum contributes well to strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It provides excellent preparation for the opportunities and challenges of life in modern Britain.
- Senior leaders have used the extra primary school sports premium funding to broaden the range of sporting opportunities open to pupils and purchase additional sports equipment. As a result, pupils' rates of participation in a range of sporting activities and their involvement in competitive sport have increased.
- Senior leaders use performance management to hold teachers to account for the quality of their professional practice and in particular the outcomes achieved by their pupils. The results of performance management are used by the headteacher and governing body to make decisions about teachers' pay.
- Senior leaders understand how well the school is doing and have correctly identified the school's strengths and areas for development. However, although the actions taken to improve the school are described there is little evidence that senior leaders have rigorously assessed how effective these actions have been in order to determine, in a timely manner, whether the investment of time and resources have been worthwhile.
- The local authority took decisive action when the school's results declined in 2014. Since the start of the academic year local authority advisers have worked effectively with the headteacher and her colleagues to improve the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are regular visitors to the school. They collect much information about the operation of the school first hand and as a result know the school well. They are clear about inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the actions taken by senior leaders to remedy these. Their understanding of the arrangements for the performance management of teachers is secure and through the offices of the pay policy committee ensure that the headteacher's decisions about teachers' salary progression are linked to teachers' performance. There are governors with relevant financial expertise and, as a result, the school's finances are well managed. Governors know what the school's key priorities for improvement are and that the most pressing relate to improving pupils' outcomes, particularly in mathematics and writing. Governors have reviewed the way the funding the school receives through the

pupil premium is directed, in order to make sure that it is used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and overcome this group's weak performance in the past. Governors ensure that the school is an inclusive community, which promotes tolerance and respect for all people irrespective of their background or capability, actively promoting modern British values.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are invariably polite, well-mannered and welcoming of visitors. Pupils are proud members of the school; they wear their uniform with pride and treat their environment with respect. This is reflected in a school site that is both litter and graffiti free.
- Relationships between all members of the Bedford community are a strength of the school. This leads to a calm and orderly environment for learning.
- Pupils conduct themselves well both in lessons and around the school and the school's 'traffic lights' posters act as constant reminders to pupils of teachers' high expectations for their behaviour. Consequently, pupils rarely disturb each other's learning and respond positively when teachers either ask them to work on their own or in groups. Even when some pupils find teaching is less than inspiring, they tend to disengage quietly, respecting the right of their teachers to teach and their peers to learn. As one pupil said, 'we all cooperate and we are taught to respect each other'.
- Although the proportion of pupils subject to fixed-term exclusions has been above average in the past, this is now reducing because of the school's effective behaviour management policy, which is consistently applied by the staff.
- Pupils are well supervised by staff at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupil playground buddies, identified by their yellow base-ball caps, keep a close eye on their peers, organise games and act as a point of contact for those children who may feel vulnerable adding to their sense of security and well-being.
- Senior leaders monitor pupils' behaviour closely. They identify, quickly, those pupils whose behaviour is a cause for concern and support them to manage their behaviour better. Consequently, over time the number of incidents of unacceptable behaviour has continued to reduce.
- Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire believe that pupils are well behaved, inspectors would agree.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Those pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe and well looked after by the adults who work with them. The school site is securely fenced and appropriate members of staff control access to the site. Consequently, this minimises the risk of uninvited 'guests' entering the school.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the different forms that bullying can take. They are aware that people can be unkind to each other for a number of reasons relating to someone's race, gender or disability. Pupils also have a secure understanding of how bullies can use new technologies including mobile phones and social networking sites to upset and hurt people. Although pupils could cite examples of bullying that have taken place in the school, they also described the swift and effective action taken by the staff to deal with these incidents when they do occur. The school's 'worry boxes' are an effective strategy, used by pupils, to alert their teachers to any concerns they may have including relationship difficulties.
- Pupils are aware that it is unacceptable to use the homophobic term 'gay' to describe something that is bad. However, they informed inspectors that they do not hear this word used in school and, in any event, the staff would take decisive action if it was.
- Although attendance has been below average for the last two years and persistent absence well above average last year, the appointment of the pastoral manager, in September, has led to improvements in both measures.
- The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities for the pupils to learn about how to keep themselves safe; including how to keep themselves safe when using the internet, 'stranger danger' and how to avoid injury from fireworks.
- Senior leaders carefully monitor off-site provision and ensure that pupils who are educated away from the school are safe.
- All parents who responded to Parent View feel that their child is safe in school. Inspection evidence supports this view.

- The school's safeguarding policies and procedures are robust and meet statutory requirements.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Evidence from the work in pupils' books and observations of teaching show that teachers do not always set work that is sufficiently challenging, particularly for middle ability pupils. Consequently, this group do not always achieve as well as they might.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their developing mastery of mathematical techniques to tackle challenging and thought provoking problems or explain how they have arrived at their solutions. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics is not improving as rapidly as it could.
- Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills across the curriculum are under developed. Pupils do not have enough scope to apply what they have learned in mathematics in novel situations.
- Teachers' questioning of pupils is inconsistent. In the best examples, teachers ask questions that challenge pupils' thinking and as a result deepen their understanding. However, there are examples where teachers use closed questions, which are undemanding and only require superficial answers from pupils. In these circumstances, teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve are not high enough.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers plan activities, which are appropriately challenging, capture pupils' imaginations and create a culture of high achievement where pupils are not fearful of making mistakes. As one pupil said, 'making mistakes is a good thing, because mistakes are footsteps to learning'. However, teaching of this quality is not consistent across the school.
- Teaching assistants are effectively deployed in lessons. They help pupils access the work but do not allow them to become over reliant on the support they provide. This develops pupils' self-reliance and resilience.
- Senior leaders have taken effective steps to reverse weaknesses in the teaching of writing, over time. The scrutiny of work in pupils' books shows improvements in pupils' spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar. Teachers are also providing increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum, for example factual articles and recounts in history. Consequently, pupils' progress in writing is beginning to accelerate, albeit from a low base.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. For example, they have a secure understanding of the way that children learn phonics (the sounds that letters and groups of letters make). This has had a positive impact on the quality of the teaching of reading and contributed to the good progress that pupils make in this aspect of learning.
- Those parents who expressed an opinion said how much they value the work of teaching assistants. One parent commenting '...teaching assistants are great. They go out of their way for my child, to help him with his learning.'
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Teachers' use of different coloured pens, 'tickled pink' for work that has been done well, 'green for growth' and the 'purple pen of progress' enables pupils to identify what they need to do to make their work better and move their learning forward. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' books confirms that, in these ways, teachers' are helping pupils make progress.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Over time, pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and writing have been significantly below average. Effective action taken by senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching in these subject areas is leading to improvements in pupils' progress, particularly at Key Stage 2. However, these improvements are not yet consistently good, are slower in mathematics than they are in writing and consequently achievement requires improvement.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils of middle ability made significantly below average progress in mathematics and writing in 2014.
- For the last two years, pupils' attainment in the phonics-screening check, taken at the end of Year 1, has been broadly in line with the national average. Given pupils' starting points this represents good progress.
- Pupils' attainment in the core subjects by the end of Year 2 in 2014 were lower than the equivalent national averages however, they were an improvement on the previous year and are showing an improving trend.
- As a result of effective teaching, all groups of pupils achieve well in reading. For the last two years pupils' progress in reading, by the end of Key Stage 2 has been at least in line with national averages and is

improving.

- The attainment and progress of the most able pupils were broadly in line with national averages by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014. However, senior leaders recognise that the most able pupils are capable of better than this and additional mathematics lessons are accelerating this group's progress.
- The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils with similar starting points, both in the school and across the country, are beginning to close. However, in 2014 disadvantaged pupils left Bedford five terms behind other pupils nationwide in writing and mathematics and three terms behind in reading. The gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others with similar starting points in the school were not as wide as this; disadvantaged pupils were approximately two terms behind their peers in each subject.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those pupils who attend the off-site provision are well supported. They make progress that is at least in line with their targets.

### **The early years provision**

### **requires improvement**

- The large majority of children enter the Reception year with a broad range of skills; however, these are mostly below those typical for their age and their skills in reading and writing are well below. However, during their first year at Bedford, most children make good progress and on entry to Year 1, just over half of them have reached a good level of development. This is an improvement in children's achievement since 2013; nevertheless, a minority do not have the skills they need to access the curriculum at the start of Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics and writing is inconsistent. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what children can achieve and sometimes plan work that is too easy. As a result, some children are not making good enough progress to reach and exceed the expected level for their age in these two subjects by the end of Reception. Consequently, some children are not well enough prepared to tackle the challenges of Key Stage 1. Nevertheless, the teaching of letters and the sounds that they make is improving. As a result, a greater proportion of children are reaching the expected level in reading by the end of Reception. Further, attainment gaps between boys and girls and for those children in receipt of pupil premium are beginning to close.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of children's achievement and have identified the most important priorities for improvement, setting challenging targets to accelerate children's progress in the Reception year.
- During their time in the Reception Year children develop into confident individuals who behave well and co-operate with each other in shared play. The well-stocked and attractive environment allows them to choose the resources they wish to use in their play and as a result supports their learning. This was apparent during the inspection when a group of children used plastic crates and sections of material to make their own dragon and a cage to capture the dragon, stimulated by their recent work relating to Chinese New Year.
- Children are aware of the need to stay safe and how to keep themselves safe. While reading a book with their teacher, they were very quick to point out the risks to the main character who ended up with a hot pancake on his head!
- Leaders have established careful transition arrangements with local nursery settings to ensure that entry to Reception is a positive experience for children and their families. Parents appreciate the time that staff take to visit them in their home to find out about their child's strengths and needs.

## 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>	104892
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	456143

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	404
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Hampson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Braithwaite
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 922 1467
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