

Bilston Church of England Primary School

Albany Crescent, Bilston, WV14 0HU

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have taken a determined and effective approach to improving teaching and pupils' achievement since the school was last inspected.
- School leaders and staff have worked together in close partnership to create an environment where pupils are eager to learn and keen to do well.
- All groups of pupils in all year groups achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. Effective teaching ensures they progress well overall and make excellent progress in developing language and mathematics skills.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good throughout the school and this has led to pupils making improved progress in these areas.
- Teachers mark work regularly and give pupils good advice on how they can improve.
- Pupils are encouraged to work in collaboration with others and think things out for themselves.
- Teachers use questions effectively to make pupils think, deepen their understanding, and make good progress in their learning. The best questions are matched well to pupils' different abilities.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to each other and adults. This helps make school a very safe place in which pupils feel comfortable.
- Pupils take care with their work. They keep their books neat and are proud of their achievements.
- Senior leaders check teaching regularly. They identify areas that need improving and provide prompt support. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have both improved.
- Governors know the school well. They play an important role in planning for improvement. They ask searching questions of the headteacher and other leaders, holding them to account for the school's improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils achieve well, attainment is not yet as high as it could be for the most-able pupils.
- The work of support staff is not checked by senior leaders as thoroughly as that of teachers.
- Learning in the outdoor learning area for children in Reception is not as effective as it is indoors. Resources for children to explore and investigate, for example in science, are limited and adults do not guide children's learning so effectively.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 17 lessons. Four of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors completed 'learning walk' observations to get an overview of one-to-one and small-group support for focus groups of pupils and the quality of the curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed and discussed.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teaching assistants and pupils. Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority and with the National Leader of Education who works with the school on school improvement.
- Questionnaire responses from 38 members of staff were analysed.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for them to be published. Inspectors looked at the results of the school's recent questionnaires, giving parents' views of the school. An inspector spoke to parents collecting their children at the end of the school day. Inspectors took account of five letters received from parents.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gareth Morgan	Additional Inspector
Suha Ahmad	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Children attend Reception full time.
- A minority of pupils, about two-fifths, are White British. The majority come from a wide range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. The largest group is of an Indian background.
- An average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is a breakfast club before school each morning and after-school care. These are managed by the governors and were included in the inspection.
- The school is part of the local authority's expansion programme to meet the increasing demand for school places. There are now two classes in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Years 3 to 6 have one form in each year. Pupil numbers are projected to increase each year so that by 2020, the school will be two-form entry throughout. The proportion of pupils joining Year 2 this year is high as a result of governors accommodating a local authority request for a 'bulge cohort' in this year group.
- Since the last inspection, four teachers have joined the school.
- The school is supported by a National Leader of Education, the headteacher of Manor Primary School, Wolverhampton, a national teaching school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment and accelerate progress by ensuring that teachers:
 - always set challenging work so that the most-able pupils make more rapid progress and achieve the levels they are capable of reaching
 - improve learning in the early years' outdoor learning areas, including more resources and better discussion between adults and children, so outdoor learning for young children is as good as that inside.
- Extend the rigorous systems for setting performance targets for teachers to include support staff.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- A determined approach to improve the school's effectiveness by the headteacher and senior leaders has resulted in improvements in all key areas of the school's work. Staff at all levels have engaged very well with the support provided by the National Leader of Education and the staff of her teaching school. Leadership and management are now effective, teaching is good and this has led to improved learning and good achievement. Leadership has improved to a point where it is now able to sustain recent improvements with reduced levels of external support.
- Regular checks on the quality of teaching, followed up by feedback and supportive action, have been effective in improving teaching. Senior and subject leaders observe lessons, check the work in pupils' books and take account of ongoing assessments of pupils' progress to build a detailed profile on the work of each teacher. They use the information well to provide support to help teachers improve their skills. Teachers new to the school are helped to settle in quickly and their work is carefully checked so that the good quality of teaching is maintained.
- The leadership of subjects and other key areas of the school's work is good. Guidance for staff and well-chosen training programmes, designed to meet their particular development needs, have resulted in reading, writing and mathematics being taught well throughout the school. Consequently, pupils' achievement has improved. Under the good direction of the special educational needs coordinator, the school provides an impressive range of effective programmes to support the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Good use of the pupil premium has helped close gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally. Qualifying pupils receive small-group or one-to-one support to help them catch up. Leaders are working to improve the attendance of these pupils so they are learning regularly. They are fully included in all school events and visits, and this helps to encourage their positive attitudes.
- Leaders spend the primary physical education and sport premium effectively. Sports coaches work alongside class teachers to improve the teaching of physical education. A strong focus is placed on providing swimming lessons for Key Stage 2 pupils so they all become competent swimmers. Leaders have noted an increase in the number of pupils attending sports clubs and improved physical skills among pupils.
- The school gives high priority to safeguarding and child protection. Thorough checks are made on all adults coming into contact with pupils. Training for all adults on child protection and first aid is up to date. Staff are vigilant and know what to do if children share sensitive information.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well through lessons and the daily life in school. School assemblies of an extremely high standard make a significant contribution to this area of pupils' development. The school celebrates pupils' achievements publicly so that they appreciate their own success and that of others. Pupils develop a deep awareness of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour through the school's strong code of conduct. Pupils respect diversity, as seen in the way pupils from different backgrounds work and play together.
- The school promotes British values well throughout the curriculum and through school life in general. Pupils have contributed their ideas to 'Bilston Values' which have close links to published British values. They gain an understanding of how Britain has become the country it is today through annual 'British History' days and 'Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics' days. Pupils are taught to understand how democracy works through elections for the school council and Head Boy/Girl positions. They understand the need for laws and rules and how these protect an individual's liberty by being part of a safe community. Pupils learn respect for each other and for the world's major faiths in assemblies and religious education lessons. The school prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school is good at celebrating diversity and any form of discrimination is strongly discouraged. The school encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to others, whatever their background or ability. Staff ensure that all pupils are included in all activities and most pupils have an equal opportunity to

succeed, but sometimes work lacks challenge for the most-able pupils. However, good academic progress, and positive attitudes prepare pupils well for the next stages in their education.

- Parents think highly of the school. They value opportunities to come into school and work alongside their children in the weekly 'Family Learning' events. Those spoken to at the end of the school day said the headteacher and staff are very approachable and they deal with any parental concerns effectively. They feel communication between the school and parents is good.
- The local authority has played an effective role in helping move the school forward. It knows the school well and has an accurate view of its effectiveness. During regular focused visits from the local authority, senior leaders have opportunities to discuss school improvement. The local authority helped set up the very effective link with the National Leader of Education and her national teaching school, which has supported improvement very well.
- Leaders set challenging targets for the work of teachers and these have helped improve teachers' performance. However, checks made on the work of support staff are more informal and are not as robust, so there is less accountability for these members of staff.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is good. Governors challenge leaders and hold them to account for the school's performance. They have regular meetings with senior staff to discuss school improvement.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses in the performance of staff and pupils through visits to the school, detailed reports from the headteacher and links with subject leaders. They understand assessment data and are aware of how pupils' achievement compares with other schools.
- The governors know the community served by the school very well through the work of the parish and use their knowledge effectively to help the school meet community needs.
- Governors set challenging targets to ensure the effectiveness of the headteacher and staff. They know how good the teaching is and make sure that teachers' pay increases are linked to competence and impact on pupils' achievement. The governors tackle underperformance of teachers effectively through not awarding pay rises when teachers do not meet their targets. They monitor the impact of any actions taken to improve teaching.
- Governors make sure that all statutory requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Their conduct in lessons and at other times throughout the school day is excellent. Pupils are exceptionally polite and considerate towards each other, adults and visitors to the school.
- Pupils with behavioural issues stay settled and make good progress in their learning as a result of the robust and consistent implementation of the school's behaviour management systems. The number of behavioural issues recorded over time is now very low. There is no evidence of disruptive behaviour in class; pupils value their own and others' learning.
- Pupils say they greatly enjoy school. Attendance has improved to average. The number of pupils missing large amounts of school have fallen sharply.
- Pupils comment enthusiastically on the wide range of interesting learning opportunities. Pupils contribute to school life very well, including suggesting and planning some of school's values. School councillors take their role seriously.
- The pupils are very keen to do well. They concentrate hard in lessons and approach the work set for them confidently and with enthusiasm. They are quite used to finding things out for themselves and do not rely on the teachers for help. Pupils take a great deal of care over the quality and presentation of their work.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are very safe in school. They view school as a safe place and say they could always find help if they ever feel worried about anything. Pupils as 'peer supporters', who have had special training for this responsibility, are effective in helping pupils experiencing difficulties and in resolving minor differences.
- Pupils describe the school as 'one big family'. They feel very safe in school, as summed up in the words of one pupil who said, 'I love this school, because people accept me for being me.' This is typical of the way in which pupils recognise the school as being a very safe place to be.
- Pupils develop a thorough understanding of how to keep safe when using the internet through the school's e-safety presentations. They are aware of the many ways young people can be bullied and know what to do to avoid difficulties in or out of school. They say there is no bullying in school but they know what to do should it ever happen. Parents feel their children are safe in school.
- Staff are knowledgeable about child protection. They are vigilant and intervene if they note that any child may be at risk. They work in close partnership with external agencies to ensure the safety of children in and out of school. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date. Child protection procedures are applied diligently.
- Pupils are very well cared for in the popular breakfast and after-school clubs. These have a positive impact on pupils' health and nutrition, ability to socialise, attendance and punctuality to school.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Effective teaching of English and mathematics enables pupils to make good progress in these subjects. Reading is taught well. Teachers in Key Stage 2 plan opportunities for pupils to read in literacy lessons and so build on the good learning of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) in the early years and Key Stage 1. Pupils learn to interpret what they read and so become competent readers.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to write regularly and in a range of different subjects and styles. They redraft and correct their work until they are happy they have written the final and best version. Numerous opportunities for pupils to apply what they have learnt in mathematics helps them consolidate new learning and make good progress.
- Teachers are particularly good at asking questions to encourage discussions and extend pupils' learning. Most questions are carefully planned to match the different levels of ability and so make pupils of different attainment think deeply at a level they can manage. Teachers ask searching questions that make pupils think carefully and come up with the answers to questions for themselves.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and so capture pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils report teachers keep them fully aware of the expectations of their work and behaviour and of how well they are moving towards achieving their targets. Pupils confirmed that they are aware of their progress and of their next steps in learning. Pupils are encouraged to take some responsibility for their learning through assessing the own work and that of their classmates. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. They point out what pupils have done well and identify key points for improvement.
- Teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils make good progress. They are skilled in the support they give and work effectively with pupils. They help disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make the same good progress as other pupils. This good work is not formally recognised, however, through a robust appraisal process similar to that provided for teachers.
- Teachers monitor pupils' progress carefully in lessons. They generally recognise when pupils are ready for the next steps of learning and move them on quickly so pupils make good progress. Disadvantaged pupils who struggle with their work and pupils with special educational needs are checked carefully and supported well so they catch up. However, there are occasions when the most-able pupils are not moved on quickly enough or given hard enough work to help them achieve the levels they are capable of

reaching.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many children enter school with attainment below that typical for their age. The weakest areas are in language and communication, particularly speech, physical development and in their understanding of the world through limited experiences. They make good progress overall and an average proportion of children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. This proportion is steadily increasing year-on-year.
- Achievement by the end of Key Stage 1 is improving. Although attainment was below average in mathematics in 2014, it was broadly average in reading and writing. Current tracking information shows pupils are set to achieve average overall attainment in reading and mathematics, but below in writing. However, progress data for the current Year 2 show a good level of achievement over time. The proportions of pupils achieving levels expected for their age are much higher now than they were when these pupils joined Year 1, showing good progress over the key stage.
- Pupils in Year 1 build well on the good start made in Reception in learning early reading skills. The results of the most recent Year 1 phonics screening were broadly average.
- Achievement through Key Stage 2 has improved and is now good. Pupils' books, current school assessment data and lesson observations show improving standards and good progress across all year groups. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is typically in line with that expected for pupils' ages. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach average attainment at the end of this year. From their starting points at the beginning of the key stage, achievement is good in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2014. It was broadly average in writing and mathematics but below average in reading. Achievement dipped below the good levels recorded in 2013. This was due to a high proportion of pupils with low attainment and significant additional learning difficulties joining the school in Years 5 and 6. Overall, pupils made expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, but data for pupils who completed the whole key stage show good achievement.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, particularly pupils of Indian heritage, make good progress and achieve well. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. Through effective and carefully chosen support, they quickly learn enough English to make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the good individual support they receive which meets their needs effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils did well in 2014. They made better progress than other pupils in the school overall in reading, writing and mathematics. This managed to close the gap significantly over the gaps with other pupils nationally in 2013. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were two terms behind others in the school and almost a year behind other pupils nationally in mathematics. In reading they were in line with others in the school but two-and-a-half terms behind other pupils nationally. They were around a term behind others in the school and just under three terms behind other pupils nationally in writing. The latest school assessments show disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and working at levels within a term of other pupils in school and where they are expected to be nationally for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able are now making good progress but, because of past underachievement, they are not yet attaining the levels they are capable of reaching. The percentages who reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 in 2014 were below average. There are indications that the most-able pupils are now beginning to catch up, but this improvement is not yet sustained over time.

The early years provision is good

- Good leadership and management of the early years are creating an environment in which children can grow and learn effectively. From starting points that are typically below those expected for this age, children achieve well to attain average standards at the end of the Reception Year. Children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Adults are fully aware of what each child knows and is capable of doing. They plan activities that challenge and extend children's knowledge and understanding. Adults help children to develop very secure basic skills. Reading, writing and mathematics are taught particularly well so that children's progress is rapid in these areas. Already the attainment of the majority of children places them above the expected levels for the end of Reception. Children write complex sentences using connectives. They use adjectives to make their writing lively and are confident to read their own work out loud.
- In mathematics, pupils are good at using numbers in counting and measuring. Most use more difficult mathematical skills such as estimating large numbers accurately.
- Adults talk a lot with children to extend vocabulary and encourage curiosity, especially indoors. This is particularly useful in developing children's speech, which is a weak area on entry to school.
- Children behave well. They get on well with each other and work well in groups, sharing ideas and equipment willingly. Children interact well with adults, listen carefully and concentrate. They remain focused for lengthy periods of time, staying focused on their tasks. Children respond to requests quickly, listen politely to adults and each other. Adults are vigilant in making sure that children are safe and secure during their learning and play activities.
- Although still good, children's learning outside is not as effective as it is indoors, where teachers keep a vigilant watch over all groups. Outdoor resources for children to explore and investigate in science-based activities, for example, are limited. Adults do not work with children outside as much as they do indoors by checking children's learning and asking questions to help direct children's investigations. Consequently children do not experience the same high quality learning outside as they do indoors.

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	130305
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	462531

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Johnson
Headteacher	Gary Gentle
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2013
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