

# Broom Barns Community Primary School

Homestead Moat, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 1UE

**Inspection dates** 10–11 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	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

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils do well in English and especially mathematics.
- Teachers do not always demand enough in terms of pupils' work in lessons, or show clearly through marking and the use of targets how pupils can improve.
- Teachers miss opportunities to reinforce pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics across different subjects.
- Although most pupils behave well, too many quickly become restless and fidgety, especially when lessons do not maintain their interest.
- The school's leaders are ambitious and have improved teaching and learning since the previous inspection, but their plans for further improvement are not as clear as they should be.
- Leaders visit lessons regularly to check the quality of teaching and provide feedback to teachers, but do not make enough use of information gained from checking pupils' work to improve the quality of teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved this year, and the Year 6 results were above average.
- Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where staff plan activities that closely match children's abilities and interests.
- Good support helps pupils who find some aspects of school difficult to keep up with their classmates.
- Pupils feel safe. Most attend school regularly and on time, and exclusions are rare.
- Good opportunities in art and music contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 16 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. They listened to pupils read and scrutinised their work.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, groups of pupils, parents and a representative from the local authority.
- Among the documents scrutinised were school development plans, minutes from governing body meetings, pupils' assessment information and documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the Parent View online survey to establish the views of parents and carers.

## Inspection team

Joy Considine, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Aileen King

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is average in size for a primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, for which the school receives additional income, is above average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is about average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been some significant changes to the teaching team since the previous inspection, and the school is currently led by an acting headteacher.
- The governors run a breakfast and after-school club on the school premises.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is consistently good or better by:
  - setting clear learning aims for each lesson so that pupils know what they are expected to learn
  - making better use of assessment information to plan lessons that build on and extend what pupils can already do, and to provide clearer guidance to pupils on how they can improve and correct their work
  - setting ambitious targets for each year group and encouraging pupils to work independently for sustained periods of time.
- Raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills across a range of subjects while reducing the use of photocopied worksheets
  - ensuring that pupils quickly develop a secure grasp of basic number skills, so they can use these confidently to solve mathematical problems
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use books regularly in all lessons to deepen their reading skills
  - making sure that all pupils develop a secure knowledge of letters and the sounds they make to work out unfamiliar words.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - using the outcomes of self-evaluation to create school improvement plans that link directly to improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement
  - creating a strategic plan showing how the school is to develop over the longer term
  - making the monitoring systems more robust by including a regular scrutiny of pupils' work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- After a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, progress is more variable further up the school. It is generally good in Key Stage 2, and this ensures that by the end of Year 6 attainment is above average. However, the work seen in pupils' books and assessment information held by the school shows that progress for pupils in some year groups requires improvement.
- Children start Nursery with skills that are below the levels expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, where they feel safe and secure and play and work well together. Good progress in learning about letters and sounds (phonics) helps them to develop securely their early reading and writing skills.
- Girls have made better progress than boys in the past, but actions taken by school leaders are helping to ensure that the gap is closing. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. This is because school leaders have introduced more efficient systems to record and track pupils' progress.
- Pupils who are at risk of underachieving are provided with additional help from skilled teaching assistants in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Some of these assistants are funded through the pupil premium. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics, because they have few opportunities to record their work independently. Too much use of small whiteboards and photocopied worksheets limits the amount of work that pupils can record. In Years 5 and 6 there are some good examples of extensive and imaginative writing in which pupils use a wide range of vocabulary to engage and sustain the interest of the reader.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics varies between classes. This is because they have not consolidated their basic number skills at a sufficiently early stage. While some teachers plan lessons that build on previous learning, this practice is inconsistent. By the end of Year 6, many pupils have caught up and confidently apply their knowledge of number to a variety of problems including fractions, decimals and percentages.
- Many pupils read fluently and competently but there are few opportunities for them to read for information when learning in different subjects. A few pupils in Year 3 have not yet developed a secure knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 6 read independently and for pleasure. During the inspection they were enjoying the class text, *Kensuke's Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo. Sensitive questioning by the teacher allowed them to reflect on concepts such as sadness and loss, promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress in building up their key skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers set clear learning intentions so that pupils understand

what they are expected to do. In these lessons, teachers make good use of assessment information to plan learning activities that are well matched to pupils' learning needs. Most teachers set targets for pupils but occasionally these are not high enough to improve pupils' progress.

- All lessons feature warm and caring relationships between adults and pupils. In most lessons teaching assistants give valuable focused support for pupils who need additional help. Occasionally, they do not encourage pupils to develop independence and they become too reliant on adults, failing to build skills such as resilience when learning something new.
- The best teaching is typically lively and enthusiastic and captures the interest of pupils. The pace is often brisk with some imaginative activities to inspire pupils to work hard. In a few lessons, teachers' expectations are too low and the activities provided for pupils do not extend learning.
- In most lessons, pupils talk about their work in groups or with their 'talk partners' and this helps them to develop their knowledge and understanding. Most teachers are skilled at asking questions to probe pupils' thinking. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, the teacher explored pupils' understanding of the story *Grace Darling* and this enabled them to develop their ideas and expand their vocabulary.
- Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make comments on what they have done well, but a few do not always inform pupils about how the work can be improved or what they need to learn next. This prevents some pupils from learning from their mistakes because they have few opportunities to correct their work.
- Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have created a calm, safe and well-ordered environment with stimulating areas in which children can work and play. Children are motivated and keen to learn, and adults are skilled at intervening to discuss their activities so that children make good progress.
- In the Nursery children were making a collage of an elephant related to the story of *Elmer the Elephant* and were happily discussing the various adventures the elephant had been on. Adults keep detailed records of each child's achievements and use this information to plan activities to build on their learning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **requires improvement**

- Pupils and their parents and carers say they feel safe in school. However, behaviour requires improvement. Staff have implemented consistent systems to manage behaviour so that pupils understand what is expected of them, but when lessons do not hold their interest pupils too readily become fidgety and restless. Occasionally they offer little to discussions and sit passively or chat about matters that are not work-related.
  - Pupils enjoy school and say they feel well cared for. All pupils are welcomed and accepted into school and staff will go out of their way to ensure that their individual needs are catered for. Parents and carers agree that their children are happy in school.
  - Pupils attend school regularly and are punctual to lessons. They are polite, friendly and well mannered and mostly move around the school in a safe and orderly manner. Records kept by the school show few reported incidents of poor behaviour or bullying, and exclusions are rare.
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- Pupils say they understand the risks associated with substance abuse and the dangers outside school such as on the roads. They understand different forms of bullying such as that related to prejudice and cyber-bullying. They say bullying is rare and that most pupils get on well together. On the odd occasions when problems do arise, adults are always on hand to help.
- The breakfast club provides pupils with a calm and nutritious start to the school day and the after-school club provides a variety of games and activities that help to develop pupils' social skills.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Despite some successful actions for improvement, leadership and management are not good enough to ensure the rapid improvement necessary to lift pupils' achievement.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The current school improvement plan is clearly set out but there are too many priorities for school leaders to implement and monitor. While some relate specifically to the school's immediate needs, a few are unnecessary and divert leaders from focusing on what most needs to be done.
- The acting headteacher has maintained a purposeful atmosphere in the school in the absence of the headteacher. She has worked in close cooperation with staff and governors to ensure that day-to-day management systems run smoothly. She has established a clear vision and has implemented some effective actions such as the new assessment and tracking systems, to raise pupils' achievement.
- Senior leaders check the work of teachers by visiting lessons and checking teachers' plans. Although they look at pupils' work this is not systematic, and information gained is not used well enough to improve the quality of teaching. All staff have regular discussions about their work, and targets for improvement are linked to their professional needs.
- Staff have responded positively to the support provided by the local authority. Consultants provided support for subject leaders and this has helped to improve attainment at the end of Year 6.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, but does not give enough emphasis to ensuring that pupils consolidate their literacy and numeracy skills when learning in different subjects. The quality of art and music is a strength of the school that makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority by leaders and governors. All adults who visit school are carefully checked and arrangements for child protection are good.
- Staff work in close cooperation with external agencies to provide additional support to pupils and their families should the need arise. Discrimination on any grounds is not tolerated and the narrowing of the gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school through a programme of visits to classes and links with subject leaders

- is aware that the pupil premium funding has been used to allocate additional classroom support, but has not yet evaluated the impact of this support
  - provides good challenge and support to school leaders and is ready to take a more active role in shaping the direction of the school rather than relying on information supplied by leaders
  - is involved in evaluating the work of the school and discussing future priorities, but at present has no long-term strategic plan to show how the school is to develop over the next few years.
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## 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>	117189
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405691

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>	213
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jason Creasey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Currant (acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11–12 November 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 354913
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