

Broom Barns Community Primary School

Homestead Moat, Stevenage, SG1 1UE

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from starting points that are often significantly below those typically found. Their progress has rapidly improved since the last inspection due to consistently good-quality teaching.
- Attainment has risen over the last three years. In Year 6 in 2013 it was above average overall, and especially in reading. This year, more pupils are on track to reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is exemplary and this has a very positive impact on their learning. The school's work to ensure pupils' safety is excellent.
- The improvements made to leadership and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection show the school has the capacity to continue improving.
- The school has actively sought extra support, advice and training through a range of partnerships. This has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The governing body has improved the way it challenges and supports leaders by developing an innovative system for closely checking the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The standard of boys' writing remains below that of the girls.
- Some teachers do not ask pupils searching questions in lessons to check the success of their teaching.
- The school does not make effective use of the outdoor environment to support pupils' learning.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work are not high enough in some subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 16 lessons. A number of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, governors, pupils, staff, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined. Some pupils read books with the inspectors.
- The inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as around 80 responses to the school's own parental questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' progress and attainment produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and leaders' plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

Geof Timms, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Broom Barns Community Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- A large majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve teaching further by:
 - building on recent improvements made to the teaching of boys' writing so that the quality continues to rise
 - ensuring that teachers show high expectations of what pupils are capable of in all subjects
 - helping teachers make better use of the outdoor facilities to support pupils' learning
 - improving the questions teachers ask so that they can better judge the success of their teaching during lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When they start in the Nursery class, most children have levels of knowledge and understanding which are well below those typical for their age. They often have lower than expected skills in communication, language, literacy and writing. Children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Even so, by the time they start Year 1 attainment is still below average.
- The 2013 national tests at the end of Year 2 remained below average. However, overall standards have consistently risen for the last three years due to better teaching and more challenging leadership. The current pupils in Year 2 have made good progress this year, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average and this represents a rapid rise over the past three years. Standards in reading in 2013 were significantly above average. In mathematics standards rose sharply as a result of improved staff expertise, especially in teaching problem solving and mental mathematics. Current Year 6 pupils' progress is well above that expected nationally, and they are on track to reach overall standards at least similar to last year. More pupils are on track to reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The results of the 2013 Year 1 check on pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds (phonics) were below the national average, although they had made good progress. The current Year 1 pupils are on track to achieve a level at least 20% higher than last year. This reflects the good-quality teaching of phonics and reading the younger pupils now receive.
- Progress in reading is good throughout the school. Pupils have good access to a range of books. A lot of those who read to inspectors were reading non-fiction books with some interest and could talk happily about their favourite stories. A Year 1 pupil, for example, talked confidently about their favourite Roald Dahl book. Older pupils clearly enjoy books and read widely.
- The progress made in writing is often good and standards are improving rapidly. Even so, the school is aware that the boys' progress and attainment in writing lag behind those of the girls throughout the school. Further training for all staff, for example in the correct use of grammar, is having a very positive impact on pupils' progress and they often point out errors to staff unprompted. However, this has not yet led to higher standards. In mathematics, good achievement is evident throughout the school and the weaknesses raised at the last inspection have been successfully addressed.
- There is some good achievement in other subjects such as art and design and physical education. However, at times, the level of challenge and teachers' expectations evident in pupils' work in books are not as high as in literacy and numeracy. Because of this, standards are sometimes lower than pupils are capable of achieving in science, history and geography.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive effective extra help, and this is reflected in their current good progress. The school's data show that there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups, including the most able. The pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress that is often better than that of their classmates. In 2013 there was a large gap in attainment of three terms in mathematics, although the gaps in reading and writing had narrowed significantly to around half a term.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. Leaders are working to ensure that more is outstanding. Pupils talk positively about how they enjoy lessons and especially how the teachers make the learning interesting and enjoyable.
- Teachers create good conditions for positive and purposeful learning in classrooms. This is largely due to the support and challenge provided by the headteacher and the other senior leaders. Where their observations highlight areas for improvement, they provide extra training for teachers. This has had a very positive impact on, for example, the teaching of mathematics. One teacher wrote to the inspectors that the emphasis on improving teaching 'has enabled me to address inconsistencies and improve outcomes for all learners'.
- Teachers' use of assessment information and other data has improved extensively since the last inspection. Teachers are more aware of how well every individual in their class is making progress. This helps them check regularly on the progress of those eligible for the pupil premium, for example. However, teachers do not always ask questions effectively enough during lessons to check on the success of their teaching or whether they need to alter the difficulty of the tasks provided.
- The parents of Nursery and Reception children are very positive about their children's start at the school and the children are happy, active and used to routines. This was especially evident during a Nursery 'stay and play' session, when a lot of parents spent the morning working alongside their children sampling a wide range of activities.
- The marking of pupils' work is good. It provides clear suggestions for improvements and is constructive. Teachers mark the work regularly and pupils respond to the helpful comments. Pupils talk positively about the marking system and how it helps them improve. They also enjoy the projects that are often set for homework. Year 6 pupils showed a real pride in the excellent models of volcanoes they had created, for example. Pupils also talk about how they learn when the school has a specific themed project such as the month-long health and life skills topic.
- There are occasions when teachers do not provide work that is challenging enough for pupils in subjects such as science, history or geography. However, small-group work or one-to-one sessions are effective in supporting the learning of those who find learning more difficult and also to provide extra challenge for the most able pupils. Some disabled pupils spoke highly of how well included they are and how positive the teachers and other pupils make them feel.
- Specialist teaching is used effectively in physical education. Sports coaches and apprentices support the teachers' developing skills and sessions provide some good learning opportunities for all age groups. Although the school has extensive outdoor areas, it does not use these effectively to support learning in subjects such as science and geography.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In all lessons observed, pupils behaved impeccably and showed highly positive attitudes to learning. They are very keen to learn and this has a major impact on their rapidly increasing progress. Throughout the school pupils thoroughly enjoy their work.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes start the day happily and productively, quickly settling into routines. This is supported by parents' positive views about how much their children enjoy school and how well the staff support not just the children but the whole family.

- Pupils talk openly about aspects of school life which they enjoy or would change. They have excellent opportunities to take on a wide range of responsibilities, from play leaders and buddies to helping the youngest children play responsibly at lunchtimes. The work of the 'nurture' staff helps pupils, some of whom have social and emotional needs, to play a full part in school life.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils explain why they feel safe in school, and parents confirm this view. The school provides a variety of activities to encourage pupils' learning about how to stay safe, such as during the recent life skills project.
- Pupils are very confident that there are adults in school who they trust and would confide in if worried or concerned about anything. They say bullying is extremely rare and there has been none in recent years. They are aware of the different types of bullying, such as through the use of computers or mobile phones, and of how to keep themselves safe while using new technology.
- Where pupils have been excluded from school in the past, this was carried out correctly and the actions were appropriate for those pupils. The support for pupils facing challenging circumstances is very effective, and case studies show these pupils making very good progress. The good-quality before- and after-school club helps the pupils who attend to have a calm and productive start to the day and to develop social skills through a range of activities.
- Attendance is rising and the latest data show it is now above average. Any patterns of regular absence are well tracked by the school, involving the appropriate legal processes where required. Persistent absenteeism has fallen significantly and is limited to a very small number of families. The vast majority of the parents appreciate the importance of full attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body are providing excellent direction, a clear focus on speeding up pupils' progress and a firm commitment to make the school outstanding within a short time. Subject leadership is not yet consistently effective in raising pupils' achievement.
- The staff, governors, pupils and parents talk very positively about how the school is rapidly improving due to the excellent leadership of the headteacher. All staff say they are proud to be a member of staff at the school. The school is clearly on an upward trajectory and has a good capacity to improve further. The school's view of its effectiveness is accurate, and it knows what remains to be done to improve further. The 'single plan' for school improvement is detailed and contains appropriate priorities.
- The school continually seeks to improve the effectiveness of teaching. The monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning is carried out by senior leaders and governors. In addition, assessments of pupils' work are regularly checked to make sure they are accurate. Expertise, such as that in the Nursery or for dealing with significant special educational needs, is being shared with and used by other schools. Training has been used effectively to extend the skills of teachers and teaching assistants.
- The local authority has supported and challenged the school well since the last inspection. Regular meetings are held with staff and governors. The school's leaders check how well pupils are achieving in detail and suggestions for rapid improvement made, with access to appropriate training if necessary. The school is positive about the support it has received. In addition, strong partnerships with other local schools have had a good impact on leadership, as the headteacher has been able to work jointly with other headteachers on checking the accuracy of her

judgements about, for example, the quality of teaching, and the schools have worked together in providing training for teaching assistants.

- Funding available through the pupil premium is used to help eligible pupils to take a full part in school life and benefit, where appropriate, from specific resources and additional help from adults. The good progress being made by these and other pupils is monitored closely by the headteacher and governing body.
 - The money available to promote physical education and sporting opportunities is used well. Pupils are taking part in more sporting activities with other schools and this is having a positive impact on their well-being. Money has been used to join the local sports partnership, to appoint specialist coaches and sports apprentices, and future plans include developing this further.
 - The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Leaders are doing a lot of work to ensure the school is ready for the upcoming changes to the way subjects are planned. There is a good range of clubs and additional activities on offer, including extensive sporting opportunities. Activities such as taking part in dragon boat racing or visits to a local pizza restaurant bring learning to life.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Since the last inspection the governing body has greatly improved the way it holds the school to account through an innovative and very effective system of monitoring and evaluation. This involves regular visits based on well-defined aspects of the school's work, and regular meetings with, and reports from, the headteacher. Because of this, governors have an excellent understanding of the quality of teaching and how to use data to check pupils' progress.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of the system used to determine teachers' effectiveness in enabling pupils to make good progress. Decisions about teachers' pay are appropriately linked to performance and responsibilities.
 - Governors track finances well and help in deciding how to spend additional money, such as the pupil premium and sports funding.

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	117189
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	442027

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Hewgill
Headteacher	Tina Jarman
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2012
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