

Bedwell Primary School

Bedwell Crescent, Stevenage, SG1 1NJ

Inspection dates

3 December 2014 – 9 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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, with strong support from senior leaders and governors, has created a culture of high expectations within this improving school so that pupils make good progress.
- New leaders have strengthened the school's capacity for further improvement.
- Governors know the school well and have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to their learning. They listen carefully to teachers, other adults and their classmates.
- Pupils feel very safe. Their parents agree, valuing highly the care the school provides.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school. Pupils learn how to play and work happily together from an early age.
- Teachers have good knowledge and understanding in the full range of subjects they teach. They mark pupils' work very well, which helps to move learning on rapidly.
- From starting points well below those typical for their age, pupils make good progress throughout the school and reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium make good progress as a result of the effective teaching and support they receive. An increasing proportion of disadvantaged pupils are on track to reach expected levels this year.
- Pupils joining the school partway through the year, those learning English as an additional language, and the most able make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress.
- Children achieve well in the early years. They learn to respect and tolerate each other, and work well together.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing, in Key Stage 1, is not as high as in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not plan enough tasks that require pupils to write fluently, and at length, in subjects other than English.
- Although progress is improving well, results in the Year 1 national phonics (letters and the sounds they make) checks have been too low for the last two years.
- Tasks are sometimes too easy and do not require pupils to think hard enough, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 22 parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the deputy headteacher. All teachers present during the inspection were observed, as well as teaching assistants working with groups of pupils or individuals.
- Inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to lessons, spoke to pupils during lunchtime and visited play areas at break times.
- Inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in all year groups, listened to pupils read and looked at the displays in the classrooms and around the school. They also looked at information on the school's website.
- Meetings were held with two governors, the headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers and teachers with other leadership or management responsibilities. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke formally with two groups of pupils and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school.
- A variety of the school's documents were examined. These included: the school's improvement plan; the school's information about pupils' progress and the support given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs; evidence about the quality of teaching; and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors also visited an assembly and the school's breakfast club.
- As well as looking at the school's own survey, the 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a letter, inspectors took account of the views expressed by parents as they dropped off or collected their children at the beginning and end of the day. They also analysed the 36 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Christine Mayle, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Henry Weir	Additional Inspector
Matthew Rayner	Additional Inspector
Keith Williams	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school with a part-time Nursery and two full-time Reception classes.
- The large majority of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is about average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs on the school roll is about 40%. This is more than twice the national average.
- Almost 60% of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides funding to help pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority. This is more than twice the national average.
- There has been an increase, since September, in the number of pupils joining the school at times other than the usual entry year in Nursery.
- 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.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- Several new teachers, some with subject leadership responsibilities, have joined the school since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing in Key Stage 1 by planning activities that require the pupils to write fluently and at length, particularly in subjects other than English.
- Improve the results in the Year 1 and Year 2 national phonics check by sharing existing good practice and ensuring that all staff have an equally good knowledge of the teaching of phonics.
- Set tasks and activities that make all pupils think hard, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- With strong support from the senior leadership team and governors, the headteacher checks teachers' work rigorously and holds them to account for the progress that pupils make. This has successfully secured improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher has high expectations of what staff and pupils can achieve. These are clearly communicated to all staff, governors, pupils and their parents and carers. All leaders are committed to ensuring equal opportunity for all pupils so that they achieve well.
- The work of leaders responsible for subjects and other aspects of the school is sharply focused on bringing further and rapid improvement. They have been successful in raising attainment in mathematics. Although Year 2 pupils' attainment in reading and writing has been below average in recent years, effective steps, particularly in improving teaching and learning in phonics, are securing improvement. As a result of better staff training, closer checks on pupils' progress and improved explanations to parents about the school's approach to teaching phonics, pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are on track to reach standards that are closer to those expected.
- Subject leaders rigorously check teachers' planning, look at pupils' work and observe lessons. The work of subject leaders is effective in ensuring that there is consistency in the way that the new curriculum is planned and taught.
- The leadership team hold regular meetings with teachers to check the progress of individual pupils in detail. Support is quickly arranged for any in danger of falling behind in their work. As a result of this effective support, pupils make good progress from the time they join the school.
- The pupil premium funds have been used well to ensure that pupils eligible for support achieve well. The gap in attainment between pupils eligible for support and other pupils in the school were wider in Year 6 last year than in 2013. However, a much closer check is now kept on the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that appropriate additional support is introduced more quickly for those at risk of falling behind. As a result, the gap in attainment between these pupils and others is now closing and, in some year groups, has closed.
- New teachers, some with subject leader responsibilities, have joined the school since the previous inspection and this has improved the school's capacity to improve further. Through performance management, leaders and managers link teachers' training to the improvements that need to be made in teaching and learning. Procedures to reward only effective teaching are robustly applied. Teachers are only awarded pay increases when their performance targets are met.
- The school provides a range of experiences to motivate and enthuse pupils. For example, younger pupils enjoyed greatly a range of activities designed around the theme, 'Flying to Jamaica'. Older pupils were very enthusiastic about taking part in a Young Shakespearean Company production of Macbeth. Work in pupils' books shows that they learn and achieve well across the full range of subjects, including art and design, geography, science, and information and communication technology.
- Pupils take part in out-of-school activities, such as sports clubs, visits and theatre productions. Visitors from all sections of the local community are invited into school to share their knowledge, such as Afro-Caribbean cooking and authentic Indian and Asian dress. The school's work with pupils' on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and permeates all aspects of its work. Pupils leave the school well-prepared for life in modern Britain. They are taught to be tolerant, respectful and to challenge discrimination.
- The school has used the additional funding for primary school sport effectively to appoint a sports instructor and to work with specialists from a local sports partnership. They work with classes in their physical education lessons, support teachers in improving their own knowledge and provide lunchtime and after-school clubs, including street dancing and fencing. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning in

physical education is good. Pupils enjoy participating in sport very much, with more than eight out of 10 attending an out-of-school sports club provided by the school. Pupils understand how practising their physical skills helps them to lead healthier lives.

- Safeguarding procedures meet all statutory requirements.
- The school works well in partnership with the local authority. It provides good support for the school, including providing consultants' visits and arranging meetings between local schools. Successful training has been provided for staff, including teachers with additional leadership or management responsibilities. Governors, also, have taken part in training which has helped to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the school's work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The membership of the governing body has changed significantly since the previous inspection. Governors have strengthened their understanding and knowledge of their roles and responsibilities. They have identified and actively participated in appropriate training, particularly in the use of school data. This has helped them to check pupils' progress and the quality of teaching more closely. They support the headteacher and offer challenge where they feel that the school needs to improve. Governors keep a close eye on the management of teachers' performance and make sure that teachers are accountable for their pupils' progress, rewarding the best teaching while holding back pay awards from any who do not meet their targets.
 - Together with the headteacher, governors have been clear in communicating their aspirations for the school, to staff and the wider community. They manage the finances well. For example, they commissioned a review of the school's use of the pupil premium and this, after the gap in the attainment of these pupils and others widened last year, has contributed to the improving picture this year. They carefully check the allocation of primary school sports funding to measure its impact on pupils' well-being, attainment and progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Excellent behaviour is a key feature of lessons and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils take a pride in their work and present it carefully. Books are neat and tidy.
- Pupils are polite, kind and considerate towards others. They listen carefully to teachers, other adults and their peers. This is in direct response to the high expectations of the headteacher and staff. Even on the rare occasions when tasks are too easy, particularly in Key Stage 1, pupils maintain their concentration well.
- In the early years, children enjoy sharing toys and know how to take turns, reflecting the emphasis the school places on their personal, moral and social development.
- Pupils take on additional responsibilities through the democratically elected school council and support each other to resolve concerns when playing together. They are taught about British values, such as having respect for different faiths, are well prepared for life in modern Britain and they understand that it is acceptable for people to hold views different from their own. Pupils are aware of others' needs so that playtimes are happy and harmonious.
- Adults and pupils work well together, creating a strong sense of community within the school. This reflects the school's strong and successful commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. As a result, pupils say they feel very safe. They enjoy attending school very much and are invariably punctual to lessons.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind – including cyber-bullying, racism or name-calling – is very rare. When it does occur, they know that they will be listened to and have confidence that it will be dealt with

promptly. They are taught how to keep themselves, and others, safe on the internet and when outside school. During the inspection, for example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed learning basic first aid.

- The school regards the emotional well-being and the safety of their pupils as a high priority and works vigilantly to check that the highest possible standards are maintained. The family support worker helps families to deal with challenging issues that may arise, so that pupils can continue to enjoy school and feel safe. Partnerships with other agencies are excellent.
- Although only a small proportion of parents and carers responded to Parent View, almost all, and those who completed the school's own parental survey, value highly the way that the school cares for their children and keeps them safe. This is endorsed by all of those spoken to during the inspection.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good or better. As a result, all groups of pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the most able.
- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the wide range of subjects that they teach. As a result, they are able to answer questions from pupils quickly, confidently and correctly, even when the question is about wider issues than those planned for in the lesson. This means that not only do teachers expand pupils' knowledge and understanding of what is covered in the lesson and beyond, but they also add to pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
- Teachers regularly check how well pupils are doing and, if there is a sign of learning slowing, individual and small-group work is arranged so that pupils catch up quickly.
- Improved teaching in mathematics has contributed to a rise in standards in Key Stage 1 to broadly average levels. Although attainment in reading, writing and phonics has been below average in Year 2 in recent years, appropriate steps have been taken to improve the quality of teaching and the way that lessons are organised. As a result, standards among current pupils in Years 1 and 2 are rising, and they are on track to reach levels that are much closer to those expected than has previously been the case.
- Across the school, teachers encourage pupils to read for pleasure and also for information. They promote a love of reading, which helps pupils to make good progress in all subjects. Activities such as 'Hooked on Books' encourage all pupils to see themselves as enthusiastic readers.
- Phonics sessions are well organised and purposeful. Staff ensure that pupils build upon what they have learned previously and good links are made between reading and writing. The school has rightly identified the need to ensure that good practice is shared more widely to enhance the subject knowledge of all staff. Plans are well in hand to tackle this.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well in Key Stage 2. Teachers and teaching assistants introduce new skills clearly and succinctly. Work in pupils' books shows they are making good progress in grammar, spelling and punctuation, areas that have previously been weak. However, pupils' progress in writing is not always as good as it is in reading and mathematics because teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Pupils and adults respect each other so that there is a strong sense of partnership in the learning that takes place. This is particularly so for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, who respect their teaching assistants and value the support with which they are provided.
- Classrooms are attractively organised and filled with colourful displays. Lessons start promptly and are conducted efficiently. Resources are well designed and appeal to pupils' interest; for example, the use of 'Learning Superheroes' puppets, such as 'Polly Perseverance' and 'Isaac Independence', encourages pupils to become better learners. As a result, pupils feel valued and know what is expected of them.

- Lessons are calm and purposeful. Teachers make clear what they expect pupils to do and outline the steps to get there. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. They provide clear written comments for pupils about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Most pupils act upon the advice they are given, revisit their work and make it better.
- In most lessons, teachers set work so that pupils have to think and work hard. Occasionally, particularly in Key Stage 1, the work is too easy for some pupils, including the most able, who are sometimes asked to do the same work as other pupils, and they do not complete it with the same degree of enthusiasm.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Nursery class with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age. From the very start, adults set high expectations of behaviour and the children's own involvement in their learning. This means that children settle into routines quickly and are keen to learn.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in Nursery and Reception. A third of them achieved a good level of development in 2014, more than double that for 2013. The school's assessments show that this proportion is set to increase again this year. Nevertheless, when children enter Year 1, their communication, language and number skills are still below those typical for their age.
- The school encourages pupils to read at home, and teachers make sure that pupils practise their reading skills when they work in all subjects. As a result, pupils enjoy reading, read widely and talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and characters.
- Pupils' competence in using mathematics in everyday situations is good. They apply their skills in a variety of ways and in different subjects. For example, in a science lesson, they confidently measured different fabrics to test how well they would stretch to make the best pair of trousers for 'Super Ted'.
- In 2014, standards in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average. Pupils made good progress from their below-average starting points in Year 3, and this has been the case for several years. The proportion of pupils making or exceeding the progress expected of them from their starting points is close to or above the national average.
- The most able pupils make good progress. The school's own checking on pupils' progress shows that an increasing number of these pupils are reaching the higher levels in Years 5 and 6, particularly in mathematics. The school arranges for these pupils to attend local activities, such as 'Whizz Kids', so they experience working alongside the most able pupils from other schools. This adds to their learning and enjoyment.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar, sometimes better progress, to their classmates. They receive effective support from additional adults, both in class and through individual help.
- The school quickly identifies the gaps in knowledge and skills for those pupils who join the school partway through the year. These pupils often arrive with skills below those typical for their age or speak English as an additional language. Skilled adults provide targeted support on a one-to-one or group basis so that these pupils make good and, at times outstanding progress, from the time they start at the school.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding well to enhance the learning of those pupils eligible for support. Between 2013 and 2014, the gap in attainment between eligible pupils and other pupils narrowed in Key Stage 1. However, in Key Stage 2 the gap widened in mathematics and reading.
- In 2014, pupils eligible for the pupil premium in Year 6 were two terms behind other pupils nationally in mathematics and three terms behind in reading and writing. They were two terms behind their classmates in writing and about four terms behind in reading and mathematics. Last year, many of these pupils had lower starting points and additional learning or emotional needs. Nevertheless, the schools records show that they made good progress. This year, across the school, the gap in attainment between these pupils

and their classmates is reducing or, in some cases, has closed.

- Although, pupils' attainment in reading and writing in Year 2 has been below average in recent years, most make good progress whatever their starting point. Improvements in teaching have increased the rate of pupils' progress. The greatest improvement has been in mathematics where standards have risen, and are now broadly average. While it is taking longer to raise standards in reading and writing, the work in pupils' books and the detailed records kept by the school show that standards are now rising and the gap between the school's results and the national average is closing. However, in writing pupils do not get enough practice in writing fluently and at length, in subjects other than English, to help them increase their progress further.
- In 2013, results in the national check on phonics at the end of Year 1 were well below those found nationally. The school rightly identified this as a priority for improvement and, although the results remained too low in 2014, there was considerable improvement on the previous year. Now that the training for staff and the additional teaching resources have had time to have an effect, pupils making faster progress this year and many more Year 1 pupils are on track to reach the expected level than in previous years. Their knowledge and use of phonics is improving well, and this helps their learning in a number of subjects, although some inconsistencies remain.

The early years provision

is good

- Since the previous inspection, the early years provision has improved significantly so that it is now good. The different physical areas are stimulating and engaging, helping children to learn. As a result, they achieve well.
- Adults provide a calm and stimulating environment in which children are happy to play and make new friends. Children enjoy working, both indoors and outdoors, on their own and with adults.
- Teaching is good. Adults assess children accurately when they start and quickly identify the skills they need to learn. Children arrive with communication, language and number skills well below those typical for their age, as well as a range of emotional and well-being needs. Activities are well planned to accelerate children's development, particularly in literacy and numeracy, through talk, discussion and play.
- Strong, positive and caring relationships promote children's emotional and physical well-being. Children learn to respect and tolerate each other and work well together.
- The school works very effectively with parents and carers so that children feel safe. Adults' regular contact with parents and carers helps children to settle in well.
- There are high-quality teaching resources for both indoor and outdoor learning. As a result, all groups of children make good progress, from their starting points, in preparation for Year 1.
- The appointment of an experienced teacher to lead this phase has successfully driven forward improvement. Teachers have a good understanding of what there is still to do and what has been achieved so far.

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	117200
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	449370

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Jones
Headteacher	Judith Moore
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2010
Telephone number	01438 351198
Fax number	01438 722740
Email address	admin@bedwell.herts.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

