

Bridlewood Primary School

Chartwell Road, Swindon, Wiltshire SN25 2EX

Inspection dates

17–18 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are not making sufficiently rapid progress to catch up with their peers.
- Too few most-able pupils across the school are achieving at greater depth. This is partly because some teachers do not fully understand what greater depth 'looks like'.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is inconsistent across the school, although additional funding is now being used more effectively to raise pupils' achievement.
- Pupils across the school are not provided with enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Although improving, the quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent. Some teaching is not yet good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Leadership is good because significant improvements have occurred in the short time since the previous inspection. As a result, leaders have strong capacity to drive future school improvement.
- Pupils are a delight. They are well behaved, polite and friendly. Staff look after them well. Consequently, they feel they belong in school and are valued.
- The curriculum is designed to interest and stimulate pupils. They study different linked topics in their subjects, supported by extra-curricular visits and activities.
- The headteacher, ably supported by other senior leaders, is steadily implementing her vision for the school. She has a very clear idea of where the school should be.
- Early years provision is good. Staff have high expectations of children, who achieve well as a result of the good teaching.
- Attendance has been in line with, or above, average for different groups of pupils over time.

Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement further by ensuring that:
 - action continues to be taken to enable pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, including those who are disadvantaged, to catch up and make similar progress to their peers
 - pupils are provided with more opportunities to practise writing skills in subjects other than English
 - leaders continue to take action to increase the consistency of high-quality teaching throughout the school
 - leaders continue to use additional funding to help underachieving disadvantaged pupils make the progress of which they are capable
 - staff are fully familiar with the requirements of greater depth in each subject and the most able pupils across the school are challenged to achieve at this level.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Many areas of the school's work have improved significantly since the time of the previous inspection. This is largely due to the impact of the headteacher. She has worked with quiet determination to make key changes during the short time she has been in post.
- The headteacher is clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has an aspirational vision for the school and has set about working in an open, collaborative way with others to realise this vision. This approach has unlocked the potential of other staff, including senior leaders. Consequently, the restructured leadership of the school is a 'well-oiled machine' and establishing rapid change for the better. As a result, leaders have strong capacity to drive future school improvement.
- Leadership restructuring has meant that leadership of English and mathematics is now much more effective than at the time of the previous inspection. Leaders are ensuring that teachers are meeting the requirements of the new national curriculum and finding creative ways to engage pupils in their learning. They are also working with teachers to become more adept at using assessment to monitor pupils' progress.
- The headteacher has implemented robust procedures to monitor and support the performance of staff through the appraisal process. She has set ambitious targets for them. As a result, staff are being held to greater account for the quality of their teaching. Monitoring activities help to determine the specific support and training required by individuals to improve their practice. Although the leadership of teaching is strong and teaching is improving as a result, it is not yet consistently good across the school.
- The school has benefited from a high degree of support from the local authority, particularly during the period prior to the new headteacher taking up her post in April 2017. The headteacher and an adviser from the local authority have formed a productive partnership. This has led to regular, frequent contact which has enabled the adviser to provide an ongoing and objective assessment of progress. Furthermore, it has enabled her to broker relevant support from other schools and organisations, as required.
- The headteacher understands the importance of 'looking outwards' to prevent the school from becoming insular. She welcomes ideas and innovations that come from colleagues and professionals outside of the school. Consequently, leaders have been proactive in setting up partnerships with other schools and organisations. Staff visit other schools and benefit from training which improves their practice.
- Pupils enjoy their curriculum, which is tailored to their interests. The topic-based approach to the curriculum enables pupils to explore themes and ideas in different contexts and subject disciplines. For example, pupils enjoy studying topics as diverse as 'Brilliant Brazil', 'Space' and 'Awesome Animals'. Pupils' work in lessons is supported by extra-curricular activities and visits. For example, during the inspection, a visiting artist worked with pupils across the school throughout the day to produce a piece of art.
- Additional funding is being better used to support the achievement of most disadvantaged pupils and those who have (SEN) and/or disabilities. Leaders have a good understanding of the needs of these pupils and evaluate provision frequently to

ensure that it is having an impact. Leaders have benefited from an external review of pupil premium funding. The findings of the review have helped them to develop a sharper oversight of this aspect of provision. Nevertheless, some strategies are proving slow to yield greater academic progress for some disadvantaged pupils in the school.

- Leaders have worked successfully to create an open, welcoming and accessible school. Parents and carers value the efforts of staff to involve them in their child's education. Parents who spoke with inspectors and who completed the school's own survey in November 2017 were overwhelmingly positive about recent improvements. As one parent said, 'It's a proper community school again.' Another parent said that leaders are 'taking the right steps'.

Governance of the school

- Governance has strengthened since the previous inspection. The chair of governors continues to grow in experience and provides an increasingly confident lead to others. He has high expectations of governors' commitment and attendance. He has led work to ensure that the right balance of skills and expertise exists on the governing board.
- Governors take a keen interest in their work. They are passionately committed to improving the school and have embraced the challenge laid down at the last inspection. They were quick to tackle the shortcomings identified in their own work.
- Governors are increasingly holding leaders to greater account for the achievement of pupils. They are using reports from external consultants and published information, alongside information provided by leaders, to ask the right questions. As one governor told the lead inspector, 'We now continue to push and probe.' Governors ask for evidence to confirm what they are told by leaders. This aspect of their work has improved partly as a result of the external review of governance that recently took place.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are the designated safeguarding leads. They understand their responsibilities and have a comprehensive oversight of safeguarding procedures and practice in the school. They ensure that staff are appropriately trained, vigilant and able to recognise signs of upset and distress.
- Should staff have a concern about a child and need to make a referral, they know whom to speak to and the procedure to follow. Referrals are kept securely. They clearly record the chronology of events, staff involvement and action taken to resolve issues. In the case of rare serious concerns, designated staff consult with the relevant external agencies. They act on advice and take appropriate action to ensure that pupils receive the support they need.
- The culture in the school encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own safety and to make safe choices. They are taught how to stay safe in a variety of situations and contexts. For example, outside speakers have spoken to pupils about fire safety, drugs and personal hygiene. Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety. They are able to provide appropriate advice to younger pupils about not sharing personal details and passwords with strangers online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school, although it is improving. Some teachers are not ensuring that the work or activities set for pupils are matched to their needs. As a result, pupils in some year groups are not sufficiently challenged to do their best and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Not enough of the most able pupils are achieving at greater depth across the school. This is partly because some teachers are not fully familiar with the requirements of greater depth and the characteristic features of exemplar work. Nevertheless, more pupils are achieving at a higher level now than they were this time last year.
- Pupils across the school are not being provided with enough opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English. Expectations of pupils' writing are now much higher, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and this is being demonstrated in English. However, pupils are not able to apply these skills to the same extent in subjects such as topic, science or French.
- Teachers across the school are now building the greater demands of the new curriculum into their planning and teaching. This is showing in the higher quality of mathematics and English work that pupils are producing. For example, pupils are now reasoning and problem-solving in mathematics to a greater degree.
- Teachers across the school are consistently applying the school's policy to provide feedback to pupils to help them improve their work. Both verbally, and in writing, teachers are posing incisive questions to prompt pupils to think more deeply and reflect on their work. The school's approach is enabling positive learning dialogues to develop between pupils and teachers. Consequently, pupils are taking more of an interest in their work and how to improve it.
- Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning where teachers plan interesting activities that meet their needs. They are respectful and attentive, listen to instructions and participate in class discussions. When required to work on their own, pupils settle quietly to the task. When required to work with others, pupils willingly 'get stuck in'.
- The school's assessment system is now more robust and fit for purpose than at the time of the last inspection. Moderation activities with other schools and training from consultants have helped staff to be more confident and accurate in their assessment. Use of termly tests has also helped to calibrate and anchor staff judgements. Consequently, staff are now better equipped to monitor pupils' progress.
- Teaching assistants are now being deployed more effectively in most year groups to have a greater impact on the pupils they assist. This has necessitated training so that teaching assistants are increasingly becoming 'skilled up' to meet these greater demands.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- Members of the school community have recently reflected on the values that underpin the school's identity and culture. Consequently, staff, pupils and parents agree that the three main values which speak loudest for the community are honesty, respect and responsibility. These values thread through different aspects of the school's work and opportunities are frequently taken to teach pupils why they are important.
- Pupils are confident and self-assured. This is because they feel comfortable in the school environment among people they trust. They know that they are valued and would happily speak to different staff if they had concerns. This supportive safety-net inspires confidence in the pupils and accounts for their willingness to get the most from their school experience.
- Pupils who have social, emotional or behavioural issues are well supported. The special educational needs coordinator and teaching assistants use various resources and strategies to help pupils become ready for learning. For example, they staff a nurture room, which acts as a safe space for pupils. They also use Lego therapy and 'messy play' to help acclimatise pupils to school. Furthermore, the parent and family support worker is on hand to help pupils and their families engage productively with school.
- The school environment is attractive, colourful and vibrant. Classroom and corridor displays are fresh and up to date. They celebrate pupils' achievements and showcase their best work across a range of subjects and themes. This enhances the tangible warmth, welcome and sense of purpose that greets visitors to the school. Unsurprisingly, pupils treat the environment with respect.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around school and walk calmly between classes. They know to walk in single file with their hands behind their backs. This enhances the 'feel' of the school as an orderly, purposeful place. Outside, during breaktimes, pupils respect each other's personal space and cooperate well with each other on the playground.
- Pupils are well mannered. This reflects the work that staff have done to remind pupils of the importance of good manners. Consequently, pupils frequently said, 'Good afternoon' to inspectors and held doors open for them.
- Attendance overall, and for different groups of pupils, has been at least in line with average over time. This is because attendance is monitored closely. Pupils' good attendance is rewarded in different ways and staff employ various strategies to involve parents in the process and keep them informed.
- Pupils report that the behaviour of their peers is good in the main. However, they said that some pupils, occasionally, take advantage of supply staff who cover classes in the absence of regular staff. Nevertheless, pupils and parents report that the new behaviour system has had a very positive effect on behaviour. Pupils are rewarded more often now for good behaviour and poor behaviour has decreased as a result.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that bullying is not an issue. One pupil told the lead inspector, it 'happens rarely'. Pupils were generally in agreement that bullying is dealt with effectively by staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- For the last two years, pupils' achievement in all core subjects by the time they left the school at the end of Year 6 was below average. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils was also below average in all subjects.
- Current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not making sufficiently rapid progress to catch up with their peers. The special educational needs coordinator understands the needs of the pupils well and is adapting provision accordingly. However, a legacy of underachievement is preventing pupils from making more rapid progress at this current time.
- The progress being made by disadvantaged pupils, according to the school's own information, is inconsistent across the school. In some year groups, pupils are making comparable progress with their peers, but not in all. The work in pupils' books, however, encouragingly indicates that disadvantaged pupils take as much pride in their work and its presentation as their peers.
- Overall, pupils across the school are now making more rapid progress, particularly in mathematics and English. This is because the demands of the new national curriculum are being met and assessment is being used more effectively to monitor pupils' progress. Work in pupils' books, particularly low- and middle-ability pupils, shows that they are being made to think harder and to grapple with difficult concepts. Pupils are developing greater mental discipline as a result and have higher expectations of themselves.
- In 2017, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 was above the national average in writing. The school's information indicates that current Year 2 pupils' progress in writing is similarly strong and continues to improve. This is also mirrored by increasing progress in mathematics over time in key stage 1.
- Pupils' achievement in phonics in Year 1 has continued to rise over time. In 2017, the proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the national phonics check exceeded the national average. The latest progress information indicates that pupils currently in Year 1 are also on track to exceed the national average.
- Leaders are proactive in their efforts to foster a culture that promotes a love of reading in the school. They have implemented many schemes to incentivise pupils to read and reward them for it. The library is also being developed to accommodate a wider range of more challenging books. Furthermore, reading records have been reintroduced to involve parents more in pupils' reading.

Early years provision

Good

- The Reception teacher coordinates provision in the early years effectively. She has a confident grasp of all aspects of provision and knows how they should contribute to a child's positive experience. She keeps abreast of current research and thinking, including Ofsted's 'Bold Beginnings' report, in order to enhance the effectiveness of provision.
- The Reception teacher is enthusiastic in her work and has a galvanising, motivating

effect on those around her, including parents. She works closely with parents so that they are fully involved in their child's education. They are made to feel welcome and know that they have a significant role to play.

- Staff have high expectations of children. The teaching of phonics is strong, in keeping with the idea 'first and fast'. This means that children receive intensive phonics teaching early on. As a result, children become secure in the use of 30 different phonic sounds and apply these in their writing.
- Children are provided with suitable opportunities to practise writing in Reception. Teachers ensure that children's fine motor skills are developed through activities such as 'dough disco', which strengthen children's pencil-holding grip. This ensures that they learn to write well from their earliest days in school.
- The Reception teacher uses accurate assessment to monitor children's progress. Assessment is used to trigger well-timed and appropriately tailored support to help children make greater progress in certain areas of their development. However, other staff are not quite as rigorous in their ongoing assessment of children.
- Good-quality teaching, well-resourced learning environments and an appropriate balance of teacher-led and child-led activities mean that children achieve well. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above average over time and is predicted to be so in 2018.
- Children behave well. They share strong, trusting relationships with adults so that they develop confidence and resilience. Staff are good role models and children learn to value kindness, cooperation and honesty.

School details

Unique reference number	134134
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10045029

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Don Chadwick
Headteacher	Vicky Sammon
Telephone number	01793 706830
Website	www.bridlewoodprimaryschool.org.uk
Email address	head@bridlewood.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 July 2017

Information about this school

- Bridlewood Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The headteacher took up post at the beginning of the summer term 2017.
- The school was judged inadequate and deemed to warrant special measures at its previous inspection in July 2017.
- The proportion of girls is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not, or believed not, to be English is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and receive support is just

below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also just below average.

- The school does not meet 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.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons. Some observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, an adviser from the local authority, the sports premium coordinator and the Reception teacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, governing body minutes, reports from external consultants and safeguarding records. Inspectors also considered information relating to the monitoring of teaching, attendance, behaviour and bullying.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and met parents before school.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and observed their conduct around the school and at break times.

Inspection team

Steve Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lizzy Meadows	Ofsted Inspector
Ross Newman	Ofsted Inspector

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