

Belvedere Junior School

Mitchell Way, Belvedere, DA17 6AA

Inspection dates 13–14 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Over time, rates of progress have been inconsistent in all year groups, across subjects and between different groups of pupils.
- While the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, it is too soon to see a lasting impact on achievement at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Standards in writing are not as high as in reading or mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not always focus their support to pupils clearly enough during lessons. Consequently, opportunities to maximise pupils' progress are missed.
- Governors are over-reliant on the external support from the partner school.

The school has the following strengths

- The ambitious and focused leadership of the executive headteacher has quickly established a culture where expectations of staff and pupils are high. There is a clear sense of teamwork and everyone understands their own role in securing improvements.
- Leaders at all levels can illustrate the positive impact of their work on improving pupils' achievements.
- Most teaching is good and there is some that is outstanding. All lessons are very carefully planned, activities are interesting and workbooks are thoroughly marked. As a result, most pupils are now making at least good progress.
- The school is a diverse and highly cohesive community. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is successfully woven throughout the curriculum. Collectively, pupils demonstrate a strong social conscience as well as possessing well-developed social skills. Their behaviour is consistently good. They feel safe in school.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress, over time and in individual lessons, are effective and reliable. As a result, additional help is rapidly directed where it is most needed and pupils do not fall behind.
- Raising attainment and progress is rightly the school's top priority. Training and support for staff are focused on this aim to good effect.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered and evaluated a wide range of evidence of the school's work. She observed 12 teachers in 16 lessons, all of which were jointly observed by the executive headteacher or head of school. In addition, the inspector made a series of short visits to other lessons, breakfast club and assemblies.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's checks on its performance, day-to-day health and safety arrangements, safeguarding measures and policy documents. The inspector analysed the school's records of pupils' rates of progress across the school. She looked at the school's use of the pupil premium funding, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, children of service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals. The inspector listened to pupils read and examined a wide range of pupils' workbooks.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the deputy headteacher and a group of middle leaders. Meetings were also held with a representative of the local authority, governors from both this and the partner school as well as with a group of pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 60 responses to the online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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.

Information about this school

- This school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school and is situated on the same site as its feeder infant school.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher, who is also the executive headteacher of a school in a neighbouring authority. These two schools are to become an academy in April 2013.
- A head of school provides day-to-day leadership of the school.
- Two thirds of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages and most of these pupils speak English as an additional language. Largest groups of pupils are from African, Indian or White British heritages. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic heritages.
- Almost half of all pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is a significantly higher proportion than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that in most other schools.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise pupils' attainment and increase rates of progress, particularly in writing, by:
 - consolidating recent improvements to teaching, including teachers and teaching assistants routinely supporting groups of pupils during lessons
 - ensuring that all subject areas are used to reinforce and promote literacy and mathematics skills
 - consolidating strategies to improve writing, including opportunities to write at length.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that the role of all adults in promoting learning is clear
 - ensuring that learning tasks are always accurately matched to pupils' next steps in learning
 - sharing the good practice that exists in outstanding teaching where pupils are inspired and challenged to work at a fast pace.
- Further increase the effectiveness of the governing body by continuing with the existing support programme until governors have gained the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to hold school leaders fully to account and to participate meaningfully in school improvement processes.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils join the school in Year 3 with skills and knowledge that are broadly average. Over a number of years, pupils have made insufficient progress and have left school at the end of Year 6 with attainment in English and mathematics below that expected for pupils of this age. In 2012, pupils made better progress in mathematics and reached the expected levels.
- The introduction of a systematic approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make), led by a highly skilled specialist teacher and training for all staff in teaching phonics and reading has resulted in significantly improved reading standards. Moreover, pupils read widely across different subject areas and show resilience when tackling challenging texts. During the inspection, some of the youngest and oldest pupils read aloud to the inspector. All pupils displayed an enjoyment of reading and used their improved knowledge of letters and sounds to work out unknown words.
- Pupils' workbooks throughout the school demonstrate good progress in writing this academic year. Thorough planning ensures that pupils are taught methodically about the elements of good writing and these skills are then combined in weekly 'Big Writing' sessions where pupils write at length. Despite this recent good progress, improving achievement in writing remains a focus as weaker teaching in the past has left pupils with gaps in their knowledge and writing skills. The introduction of writing groups for boys is addressing their relatively weaker performance in this area.
- In 2012, attainment in English was inadequate. Current school data indicate that almost all pupils are currently making above average progress. Boys and girls, those of African, White British, Indian or other minority ethnic heritages, as well as those who speak English as an additional language progress equally well in mathematics and English. As a result of precise identification of need and accurately tailored support, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are progressing even more rapidly than their peers in school.
- Last year in mathematics, the progress and attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, as measured by average points scores, slightly exceeded those of similar pupils nationally and those of all other pupils in school. In reading and writing, standards were close, although slightly below those of similar pupils nationally and all other pupils in school. Pupil premium funding is used to provide a range of group and individual tuition. This good quality support in class and in small groups outside class ensures the school is successfully enabling these pupils to narrow any remaining gaps in their learning.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Staff have focused their efforts relentlessly to improve the quality of teaching and learning to good effect. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and now much of it is good and very occasionally outstanding. Consequently, the standards being reached by pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and all other areas of their learning have increased.
- Planning is of consistently high quality throughout the school. Teachers use their assessment information to match learning tasks to pupils' individual needs. This is usually accurate, although very occasionally teachers are overambitious and tasks are too hard for pupils to tackle without a high level of adult direction.
- Much thought is given to the nature of the activities planned to make sure they grab the pupils' interests. Drama, role play and practical tasks are routinely used. In one outstanding Year 4 lesson, the class teacher and two supporting adults enacted a scene from *The Green Ship* by Quentin Blake. The pupils participated in the drama that took them outside, before commencing their own writing. The resulting writing was of a very high standard.
- In all classes, pupils have targets to work towards. Their books are marked regularly and

thoroughly. The advice given to pupils about how to improve further is clear and is regularly acted upon. Where marking, or a pupils' answers in a lesson, reveals that they have not understood, immediate action is taken to put things right. These pupils are provided with extra support on the same or following day in order that the misunderstanding is swiftly corrected. As a result, such pupils do not fall behind.

- Adults model positive relationships, attitudes and language. Pupils know that their teachers are there to help them and positive relationships abound. Pupils work well together and are experienced at evaluating their own and each other's work. Expectations for good behaviour and hard work are high. Pupils consistently live up to these expectations.
- Thought-provoking and challenging questions are frequently asked to develop pupils' understanding further or to ensure that the 'personal goals', including effort, perseverance and resilience, are being applied and strengthened. This was observed in Year 6 where the topic 'Going Global' covered many aspects of literacy and numeracy development and challenged pupils with the moral dilemma: 'Why are some people unwilling to give money to charity events?'
- In good lessons, teachers and teaching assistants spend time working with identified groups, ensuring that pupils receive focused teaching, very precisely matched to their needs. As a result these pupils move forward quickly in their learning. This approach is not, however, universal and in some lessons, the role of adults is unclear and not used effectively to help pupils improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and as they move around the school as well as at playtimes and lunchtimes. They are polite and well mannered, friendly and welcoming to visitors and eager to share information about their positive school experiences.
- The school is a highly cohesive, culturally diverse community. This diversity is respected and celebrated and provides a strong sense of spiritual, social and moral purpose for all. Pupils demonstrate a strong social conscience and have a clear awareness of those who are less fortunate. Links with a school in Ghana as well as the curriculum provide pupils with many opportunities to identify and develop positive behaviour.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for and parents and carers agree that this is the case. Pupils speak confidently about how staff are always on hand to help them if they have a worry or concern. They are taught how to keep themselves safe and have a strong awareness of potential dangers. This includes those presented by social network sites on the internet. 'We had a massive assembly and watched a big film about cyber bullying', one pupil reported. They are confident that if any aspect of bullying occurs it will be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are positive and this is reflected in their improving rates of attendance. Attendance is slightly above average.
- The school behaviour policy is widely understood and consistently applied. Pupils appreciate the chances to make amends if they have 'gone down the red triangle' and are excited by the praise and rewards for 'going up the green triangle'. As one pupil commented, 'Receiving a postcard home about what you've done well really means something! It's really exciting!' Pupils who need greater help to manage their own behaviour are identified and supported well.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher is well respected by all members of the school community. He provides highly ambitious and focused leadership. He projects absolute clarity of purpose and a determination that all pupils should receive a high-quality education within a stimulating and

caring environment.

- The leadership of teaching is excellent and has had a very positive impact on rapidly improving pupils' achievement. Expertise is sought from the partner school, the local authority or elsewhere when needed. As a result, pupils are now making good progress and gaps left by weaker teaching in the past are being robustly addressed.
 - The local authority has supported the school well through the process to become an academy in the very near future. It has provided effective professional development for staff as well holding the school rigorously to account for improvement through regular monitoring meetings.
 - Improvements to the curriculum are such that topics assigned to each year group are exciting and capture pupils' interests and imaginations particularly well. Literacy and numeracy skills are increasingly reinforced through the topics and personal development, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fully integrated. Pupils are particularly well prepared for the next steps in their education and for life in a diverse society.
 - Pupil premium funding has been used to good effect and those pupils who are benefiting from additional resources currently are making at least as good progress as, and occasionally better than, their peers. This is because the money has been precisely targeted at appropriate interventions, staffing and resources, and the impact is monitored closely. This well-considered provision ensures these pupils are rapidly narrowing the small remaining gaps in their attainment against all pupils nationally.
 - Performance management and regular monitoring of the quality of teaching are used to improve teaching and identify where teachers need extra support or training. All teachers have targets relating to raising achievement for the pupils in their class, including a specific target relating to those pupils eligible for pupil premium funding.
 - Leadership training has been extended to senior and middle leaders. The head of school takes a strong lead on many aspects of day-to-day management, including communication with parents and carers and behaviour management. All leaders, particularly the deputy headteacher who has responsibility for inclusion, are clear about their roles in driving further improvement and can illustrate the impact of new interventions or training on improved achievement. The consistent progress being made by all groups of pupils demonstrates the school's success with promoting equality of opportunity.
 - The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. This is reflected in action plans and evaluations which are regularly reviewed and amended. Current plans provide a clear steer for further improvement and afford opportunities for school leaders and governors to monitor progress against measurable targets. The school can evidence it has successfully addressed areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been significant changes to the membership of the governing body since the previous inspection. Newly recruited governors bring a range of appropriate skills and expertise and this represents a significant increase in leadership resource. The governing body is currently receiving outstanding support from the governing body of the partner school, with whom this school is joining to become an academy. This support will continue until it is no longer necessary. Organisational systems and structures are in place and all statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding, are met. The leadership of meetings has been modelled and supported, and effective demonstrations of how to level challenge at senior leaders illustrated and replicated. The governing body receives clear and comprehensive information from the executive headteacher and senior leaders, with an emphasis on pupils' progress and quality of teaching. Governors know what the pupil premium funding has been spent on and the difference this is making. The governing body understands the requirement upon it to contribute to school improvement and to ensure value for money. The governing body is fully committed to the school and is becoming more rigorous and more effective.
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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

Unique reference number	101425
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	408593

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	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Booth
Headteacher	Lee Mason-Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 January 2012
Telephone number	01322 431404
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