

Biggin Hill Primary School

Old Tye Avenue, Biggin Hill, Westerham, Kent, TN16 3LY

Inspection dates 8-9 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- The leadership of the academy remains inadequate; the headteacher and governors have not dealt with the major weaknesses in leadership identified at the previous inspection.
- The headteacher's work lacks urgency and sharp focus. The academy does not have a current working plan for improvement.
- Governors are asking better questions of the academy's performance, but they are still too accepting of reassurances from the headteacher.
- The headteacher and governors think the academy is doing better than it is.
- The progress pupils make as they move through the academy is too variable and their achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils are not challenged enough in too many lessons. Teachers' expectations are too low. Pupils are ready to learn more quickly.
- Pupils' behaviour is compliant but they lose concentration in lessons which are undemanding or when the pace is too slow.
- Pupils with special educational needs do not make as much progress as others and the management of provision for many of these pupils is weak.
- The curriculum is inadequate as much of the content of subjects is undemanding. It contributes too little to raising standards.

The school has the following strengths

- There is strong teaching in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 and many pupils make good progress in these year groups.
- Staff have established an effective programme for teaching phonics (linking letters and sounds).
- Pupils feel safe and they enjoy coming to the academy.
- The headteacher has implemented new ideas to engage parents further, including a parents' forum.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the academy at work, including four assemblies and 19 lessons; at least one lesson in every class was observed. Two of the lesson observations were done jointly with senior staff from the academy.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils, heard some of them read, and observed them while playing and when moving around the site.
- The inspection team held meetings with the headteacher, governors and many members of staff. They talked with some parents and considered carefully the 83 online responses received from parents through Parent View on the Ofsted website. The 32 questionnaires returned confidentially by staff were also carefully considered.
- Inspectors looked in detail at samples of pupils' work in different subjects as well as documents such as plans, evaluations and minutes of meetings.

Inspection team

Robin Hammerton, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Noureddin Khassal	Additional Inspector
Michael Jude	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school, with two classes in each year group.
- The academy is right on the edge of an outer London borough. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the academy receives pupil premium funding is below average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those identified with special educational needs, including those with statements, is below average.
- In 2012, the academy met the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school converted to academy status in 2011. At its first inspection in 2012, the academy was given a notice to improve, as a result of its inadequate leadership and management. Since then, Biggin Hill has been supported by staff from nearby schools, including a teaching school, and a new Chair of Governors has taken office.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve immediately the leadership and management of the academy by:
 - reviewing the senior leadership structure so that it is more effective in bringing about rapid improvement
 - writing, without delay, a plan to improve the work of the academy, which has clear targets, actions, timescales, and accountability
 - making sure leaders and governors measure and evaluate the impact of their work realistically
 - arranging an external review of the work of the governing body
 - ensuring that governors are less reliant on reports from senior staff and that their formal monitoring of the academy's work takes place frequently
 - improving the leadership of mathematics and special educational needs
 - developing the work and impact on pupils' attainment of middle leaders, and ensuring that all subjects have a leader
 - ensuring the work of midday supervisors is valued and well managed.
- Improve the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and behaviour to good by:
 - raising the expectations among staff of what pupils can do
 - ensuring the work set in lessons is consistently well matched to the different needs of all pupils
 - using information about how well pupils are doing to plan precisely their next learning steps and activities
 - ensuring that lessons are constantly well paced and stimulating, so that they keep the interest of pupils
 - ensuring pupils consistently follow up teachers' marking comments to improve their work.

- Develop the curriculum in all subjects so that it is much more challenging.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils are not achieving well, because their progress is inconsistent throughout their time at the academy. Their overall progress is broadly in line with the nationally expected progress, but they are ready to learn more quickly than this. In some year groups they do so; there are pockets of faster progress in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils achieve well in Reception classes in each of the areas of learning. They make good progress from their starting points, which match what is expected for their age. They are particularly good at writing, reading and linking letters and sounds. This provides them with a good foundation to take into Year 1.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 who read to an inspector, used their knowledge of letter sounds well to sound out words. They showed confidence and enjoyment in reading.
- From Years 2 to 5, pupils make reasonable progress in English and mathematics, but this could be improved.
- Across the academy, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in subjects, such as science, history and geography.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, do not make quite as much progress as their peers, and this also requires improvement.
- In Year 6 last year, pupils reached average standards in national assessments. English results were better than those in mathematics. Over their four years in Key Stage 2, the pupils who had lower starting points did not progress well enough. Those who started at a higher level did much better.
- Leaders expect a marked improvement in the Year 6 national test results in English and mathematics in 2013 from those in 2012. This is possible, as many Year 6 pupils have made rapid progress recently. This year group has fewer pupils identified with special educational needs than the 2012 cohort.
- In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals performed well in national assessments in Years 2 and 6. In the current Year 6 cohort too, the gap between the attainment of pupils in this group and the others is closing in both English and mathematics. However, in other year groups, the pattern is mixed.
- Higher-attaining pupils who met with inspectors knew their personal learning targets, which are linked to whole-school targets and are appropriate.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not good because its quality across the academy is variable. There is good and even outstanding teaching. But still too much teaching requires improvement or is inadequate. These inconsistencies lead to the patchy progress pupils make.
- With support from the local partner schools, senior leaders have introduced different teaching techniques across all classes. Staff have worked hard to implement these, but, too often, the changes have not yet led to better learning for pupils.
- Teachers have developed a whole-school approach to marking. Pupils like it. However, too often, pupils do not improve their work as a result of teachers' marking.
- A long-standing weakness is that the work set in lessons is not well enough matched to the different needs of the pupils. Sometimes work is too difficult. More often, it is too easy. In general, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low.
- In almost all lessons, there are positive relationships between staff and pupils.
- In the best lessons, often in Reception, Years 1 and 6, teachers know the subject and give clear explanations. They check carefully that pupils understand the main points before moving on. Teachers engage and question pupils well to extend their understanding. The work proceeds at

a good pace. Pupils understand what is expected and how they can achieve success.

- In the weaker lessons, teachers have not made sure that the activities set for pupils will help them achieve the learning purpose of the lesson. Work is not well matched to the needs of the pupils in the class, including, often, those with special educational needs. Teachers do not check carefully enough that all pupils understand key ideas before going on to something else. Sometimes, the lessons drag on with too little purposeful activity and pupils lose interest.
- The small number of teaching assistants are deployed effectively in lessons to support some pupils who need extra help.
- Phonics teaching is well organised. In Year 1, for example, pupils learn about letter sounds at an appropriate pace, and at the right level of difficulty for each group. Pupils generally sound out and spell simple words, such as 'fish' or 'dog', accurately. However, occasionally teachers do not pronounce words correctly, which leads pupils to make mistakes.
- Teaching and assemblies promote pupils' social and moral development suitably.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- This aspect is not good because too often, in weaker lessons, pupils lose interest and are not motivated to do their best. Pupils are ready to learn though, and when teaching is good and exciting, they show very positive attitudes.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average, but has dropped slightly.
- As a result of the decline in behaviour reported in the previous inspection, a new behaviour policy was introduced aimed at improving attitudes to learning. Pupils understand it and agree with it. However, this policy is not implemented in the same way by all staff. This makes it less effective.
- Senior leaders have analysed the numbers of red and yellow cards issued for misbehaviour under the new policy. Over time, fewer have been given. However, it is not certain whether this indicates an improvement in behaviour or the inconsistent way the policy is used. The rate of exclusions has fallen.
- The pupils who met with inspectors understand the importance of safety rules. Some have been involved in making posters about cyber bullying. Those who met with inspectors understand the key dangers when using the internet.
- According to pupils and senior staff, bullying is rare and dealt with quickly. Racist or homophobic incidents are uncommon. The majority of parents who responded online consider pupils are well behaved. However, a quarter disagree and one in five believe that staff do not deal effectively with bullying.
- Pupils enjoy playtimes and feel safe. They particularly value the work of midday supervisors, who are approachable and helpful.
- Some pupils now take the role of play leaders at breaktimes. This is a popular initiative, which pupils enjoy and they say has led to better behaviour. However, midday supervisors consider that more serious incidents are not always dealt with quickly enough under the behaviour policy.
- In assemblies, and when moving around the site, pupils are mainly quiet and compliant. When singing, most join in, but the quality of the singing, and the pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm, are variable.

The leadership and management

are inadequate

- The previous inspection judged the academy's leadership and management inadequate and noted that issues were tackled too slowly. The same applies now. The recommendations from the May 2012 inspection have not been tackled robustly.
- After the previous inspection, with external help, staff adopted a suitable action plan and the

actions in it have been completed. This involved hard work and commitment by senior leaders and staff. It led to change, but only in the early stages.

- Now the action plan is completed, the headteacher has not replaced or refreshed it. Therefore, there is no up-to-date plan for improvement, which is a serious oversight. The pace of improvement has slowed, with a lack of urgency in dealing tightly and relentlessly with the weaknesses.
 - As at the previous inspection, the headteacher and governors evaluate the performance of the academy much too highly. The self-evaluation is confused. It is not a realistic basis from which to plan the next steps. It has given false reassurance.
 - Leaders are not sufficiently effective in promoting equality of opportunity. They have targeted pupil premium expenditure appropriately, although the impact of this expenditure on the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is mixed. Leaders are acting too slowly to address weaknesses in the leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs.
 - The headteacher said he was disappointed at the timing of this inspection; he had hoped the potentially better Year 6 results would have been known to an inspection team coming later. However, the academy has not improved sufficiently in the year since the previous inspection. The Year 6 results, while important, are only one part of a larger picture.
 - The headteacher and governors explained that some of the difficulties arose from members of staff leaving, staff recruitment problems and dealing with staffing procedures. While these things matter, they do not excuse the slow improvement.
 - Academy staff receive well-targeted support and advice from a local group of schools, led by a national teaching school. However, this support has not been well enough used by the senior leaders to assure improvement and has been reduced.
 - Most parents who expressed their views see the academy and its leadership positively. However, more than a quarter of parents who completed the online questionnaire disagree that the academy is well led. One said, with justification, 'the systems look like they are working, but digging deeper, they are not.'
 - More than a quarter of staff members, who returned questionnaires, think the academy does not make sufficient provision for their professional development.
 - The academy has an appropriate salary structure and has not over-promoted staff. According to the questionnaires returned, most members of staff feel proud to work in the academy.
 - The lunchtime supervisors are very disenchanted with the way they are led and supported. They say that they often do not know information they need, or find it out late. They are managed directly by the headteacher but say they find him hard to approach. The headteacher believes he is approachable and is ready to speak to the supervisors whenever they need.
 - Some staff in leadership positions do valuable work. The deputy headteacher effectively ensures that, for the most part, pupils' learning and progress are accurately checked. The subject leader for English has led useful developments, as has the leader in the Reception classes.
 - The leadership of mathematics is not yet strong enough. The new calculation policy, written in response to the findings of the previous inspection, has useful elements but also limits pupils' progress when they are ready for more demanding work.
 - The leadership of subjects beyond English and mathematics is weak. It is not properly planned for by senior leaders and many subjects have no leader at all. In consequence, the curriculum is inadequate. It provides too little opportunity for pupils' cultural and spiritual development. Across subjects, expectations are too low. Too much time is spent on English and mathematics and does not lead to good progress. This has the effect of squeezing the time available for all other subjects. There is, however, a reasonable range of clubs, which are generally enjoyed by pupils and well-attended.
 - The academy's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.
 - Inspectors strongly recommend that the academy should not seek to appoint newly qualified teachers.
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■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has improved its structure since the previous inspection and brought in new members. Governors now ask more astute and searching questions. However, they are still too ready to accept the headteacher's reassurances about teaching, as well as the over-optimistic self-evaluation. The monitoring committees meet too infrequently to instil the sense of urgency the academy needs to deal with its weaknesses. They oversee performance management for the headteacher and staff but this has not brought enough improvement.
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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	137244
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	408847

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Collins
Headteacher	Mr David Payne
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2012
Telephone number	01959 575846
Fax number	01959 571682
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