

Billesley Primary School

Trittiford Road, Billesley, Birmingham, B13 0ES

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Attainment is rising rapidly across the academy.
- Most pupils make good progress from Nursery onwards and nearly all groups achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for additional government funding matches or exceeds that of their classmates in nearly all year groups.
- Pupils in the AS resource base for some pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Most teaching ensures that pupils confidently develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Teachers' firm expectations for pupils' good behaviour and progress ensure that little time is wasted in lessons.
- Teachers guide pupils' learning well. Pupils know how they can improve their work and do so.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and behave well. Pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds mix well together. New arrivals settle in quickly. Pupils are proud of the academy and speak warmly of recent improvements made by the academy's leaders. Pupils are keen to improve their skills.
- Pupils feel very safe as a result of the outstanding work carried out by staff to ensure their safety and well-being in the academy.
- The principal, vice-principal and assistant principal provide outstanding leadership. They carry out thorough and well-documented checks on how well pupils are doing.
- Senior leaders, together with other leaders and governors, make exceptional use of their checks to plan highly successful measures to raise pupils' achievement, to improve teaching and to take the academy forward.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress less well than their classmates in reading in some year groups.
- Teaching is not consistently outstanding. In a few lessons, pupils are not fully challenged to do their best.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 22 lessons. Five of these lessons were observed together with senior leaders.
- Some pupils in Year 2 were heard reading.
- Samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics were analysed in detail.
- Meetings were held with academy staff, a group of pupils, three governors, and a representative of the academy trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 questionnaires completed by staff. They also considered the 35 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the academy's own recent surveys of parents' views. An inspector spoke informally to some parents at the beginning of the academy day.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants' reports; academy improvement plans; the academy's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Julia Rapsomanikis	Additional Inspector
Rosemary Barnfield	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy opened on 1 November 2012 as part of the Elliot Foundation Trust.
- It is much larger than most other primary schools. The number of pupils on roll has risen considerably since the academy opened.
- One third of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A further third are from Pakistani backgrounds while the remaining pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Twenty-four languages are spoken. Some pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- Many more pupils than is usual nationally join or leave the academy other than at the usual entry times.
- Over one half of pupils, a well-above-average proportion, are supported by the pupil premium. In this academy, this additional funding supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well-above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well-above average.
- In April 2013, the academy opened specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs – the AS resource base – for pupils with a statement for autism. It opened with one pupil, but currently seven pupils from Reception to Year 2 attend this facility.
- The academy meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.
- Billesley Stars Playcare operates on the academy site. This provision includes a breakfast club. It is managed by the governing body and was observed as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be consistently outstanding, and raise pupils’ achievement by making sure that:
 - teachers always challenge pupils to achieve their best, including in reading activities, and make the best possible use of questioning to extend pupils’ learning and deepen their understanding
 - teachers do not rush pupils through tasks before they have had enough time to develop their ideas fully
 - staff improve the capacity of the few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who struggle with reading to understand better what they read by working with them on a wide range of fiction texts.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Nearly all pupils achieve well. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is rising rapidly and currently matches the latest national averages for Years 2 and 6.
- The levels of most children's skills and aptitudes when they join Nursery are well below those expected nationally. Last year, Reception children joined Year 1 with below-average attainment. The most recent assessments confirm that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have made good progress in all areas of learning. Most Reception children are currently working at nationally expected levels, although some children eligible for free school meals are usually working at lower levels.
- In 2013, the attainment of Year 2 pupils was average overall, although slightly below average at the higher levels in reading and in mathematics. In 2013, an average proportion of pupils were successful in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make). The attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2013 was also average overall. Pupils achieve well, given their starting points on entry.
- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are, currently, making good progress from their starting points. Pupils of Pakistani and other minority ethnic heritage who are at an early stage of learning to speak English catch up with, and sometimes exceed, the attainment of their White British classmates in Key Stage 2. Those who struggle with English are well supported to enhance their skills in using the language. The attainment of those pupils who join the academy other than at the usual times is rapidly and accurately assessed so support can be provided where necessary to ensure their good progress.
- Year 6 pupils in 2013 who were eligible for additional (pupil premium) funding attained half a term ahead of their classmates in mathematics, but nearly one and a half terms behind them in reading and in writing. However, their attainment was higher than that of similar pupils nationally. During Key Stage 2, they made good progress. The academy's current assessment data show that, in Years 1 to 6, eligible pupils' attainment and rates of progress match and, sometimes, exceed those of their classmates, including in reading and writing.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. A few of these pupils make slower progress in some year groups in reading. Some of these pupils, for example in Year 2, enjoy reading non-fiction texts and can usually work out individual words and grasp the meaning from their reading. However, they do not always understand what they have read in fiction books. Sometimes, in spite of the extra help these pupils receive in the academy, they have little opportunity to read at home to extend their reading skills, and their progress suffers.
- Pupils' achievement in the AS resource base is good. Their good rates of progress are similar to those of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs in the mainstream classes.
- In all year groups, there is ample evidence from Year 2 and Year 6 performance data and in pupils' books to show that leaders' actions to raise attainment at the higher levels are proving successful. The most-able pupils in Year 6 are skilled in assessing the quality and standard of their own work. They understand subject terminology and use this knowledge and their improvement targets well in achieving higher levels in both writing and mathematics.
- Attainment in the current Year 6 is a little ahead of that of the previous Year 6 group. Pupils

have made good progress, especially this year, from their starting points in Year 3. Work in pupils' books across the academy shows that all groups benefit from a wide range of opportunities, including work with a theatre company, to extend their writing skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. Teachers are highly experienced and have good subject knowledge. They develop their expertise well through training, research projects and sharing good practice with their colleagues in the academy and in other schools.
- Teachers' positive expectations for pupils' behaviour and progress ensure that little time is wasted in lessons. Teachers guide pupils' learning well. They make sure pupils know the purpose of the learning set and intervene regularly to check whether the pupils have understood an idea or mastered a new skill.
- Pupils gain the competence to assess their own work and know clearly what action to take to improve it. Similarly, in Nursery and Reception, children's learning journals help them in the next stage of learning.
- Pupils learn successfully to routinely lay out their written work with care. This practice is firmly established. Consequently, they organise their ideas logically and take pride in presenting the work in their books very neatly. Teachers encourage pupils to respond well in lessons, to concentrate hard and to make good progress.
- On a few occasions, pupils make excellent progress – as was observed, for example, in Year 4 mathematics, where pupils were exceptionally keen to compare different methods of multiplication. The teaching of mathematics in Year 6 is particularly effective. For example, pupils are able to apply their calculation skills to solve problems with confidence. Some pupils, especially the most able, show impressive thinking skills in explaining to teachers which strategies they have used to help them succeed with their work.
- Staff give Nursery and Reception children many varied opportunities to apply their skills in well-organised activities. The children choose learning activities and staff provide just the right amount of guidance. Consequently, the children learn in many ways, including being able to find out new, exciting things for themselves. However, staff sometimes do not question them closely enough to deepen their understanding of their learning.
- Staff in the AS resource base ensure that pupils in the different year groups are suitably challenged. They help pupils to focus, concentrate and cope with the work they are given. Pupils understand how to improve their work and are consistently supported to enable them to do so.
- Teaching assistants and other additional adults usually support pupils who require extra help well, for example, to improve handwriting skills. For example, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who find writing on paper difficult are able to demonstrate their understanding of letter formation through drawing with chalk on a variety of surfaces.
- Teachers' marking is of good quality and most pupils respond well to the useful prompts provided to help them improve their work. They say that they enjoy reading their teacher's comments so that 'they can put it right next time' and work in their books indicates that they do so.
- The teaching of reading is good overall. Reading texts are suitable for all pupils to use

confidently. Close questioning enables pupils to improve their skills in inferring meaning and to understand the importance of reading to gain knowledge and understanding. However, on a few occasions, reading activities lack sufficient challenge for pupils of all abilities, including a few with special educational needs.

- Sometimes, minor variations or weaknesses in teaching result in pupils' progress slowing because they are not fully challenged. On a few occasions, for example, teachers' questioning lacks sufficient depth or precision to challenge pupils' thinking and to ensure they all work hard. On other occasions, pupils are rushed through tasks before they have time to understand the work in hand and develop their ideas fully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy their lessons and special events, such as writers' visits. They focus well and respond willingly to the teacher's questions. Their preparedness to reflect honestly on the quality of their work and to cooperate with each other support their good progress.
- Children in Nursery and Reception generally show positive attitudes to work, work well with each other and talk easily to adults.
- Pupils of all ethnic backgrounds mix well together. New arrivals settle in quickly. Many pupils make extensive use of playground facilities, for example, the rope-work apparatus, to take energetic physical exercise at break times. Other pupils respect the rules for the use of the quiet areas and converse happily with each other.
- Pupils are proud of their academy and speak warmly about recent improvements in their learning. They are well mannered, courteous, friendly and relate well to staff and to visitors. In lessons and in other situations, for example, the well-organised breakfast club, they show tolerance and an awareness and understanding of each other's beliefs. They cooperate fully with each other and adults and show mutual trust and a keenness to improve their skills, for example in cricket and in reading lessons.
- Pupils and their parents have very few concerns about behaviour and bullying. Pupils value the rewards and praise they are given for behaving well and believe all pupils are treated fairly and equally. Leaders' firm actions have reduced incidents of inappropriate behaviour, for example, at lunchtimes. Exclusions are low and have decreased, in spite of substantial increases in pupil numbers.
- The well-staffed AS resource base ensures that pupils, whose behaviour can sometimes be unpredictable, are treated sensitively and are constantly engaged in learning. Pupils know that their efforts are valued and respond well to the frequent and well-directed praise they receive. They are fully integrated into academy life at play and lunch times and during assemblies.
- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe as a result of improvements to the site security and the actions senior leaders have taken to improve behaviour in lessons and around the academy. Procedures for managing behaviour are systematic and thoroughly documented. Support programmes are checked to gauge impact on behaviour and attendance. Incidents are logged securely and parents are informed immediately of any concerns. Racist incidents are rare.
- The academy's thorough systems for monitoring pupils' well-being enable staff to know each

pupil's needs exceptionally well. Prompt action is taken, including through the learning mentor and external agencies, to support vulnerable pupils and their families. Parents commend the approachability of staff and the regular opportunities they have, for example, through workshops in the AS resource base, to share vital information about their children.

- Pupils know about different types of bullying, for example, through projects undertaken during 'anti-bullying weeks'. They know the difference between bullying, teasing and the temporary 'fallouts' which sometimes arise. They usually make the correct choices in not taking unnecessary risks during physical play.
- Pupils are well trained in how to stay safe in potentially hazardous situations. They understand why regular fire practices are important.
- Leaders have improved attendance. The attendance of all individuals and groups of pupils is closely checked. It is rising steadily from a low baseline due to leaders' well-considered actions. Rates are lowered by the constant changes in the numbers of pupils on roll, the medical needs of some pupils and the extended visits abroad made by some pupils of minority ethnic backgrounds. Persistent absence has reduced and punctuality has improved.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The principal and vice-principal, ably assisted by the assistant principal, provide outstanding leadership. They are highly ambitious for the academy's future and are determined to make teaching and achievement outstanding. The impressive track record of improvement indicates considerable capacity for the academy to go further forward.
- Procedures are exceptionally well organised and fully focused on raising achievement, improving teaching and enhancing staff accountability for pupils' performance. Actions taken are carefully planned, concerted and reviewed regularly to check that they are having the desired impact.
- Leaders track pupils' progress exceptionally well. Comprehensive systems for collecting, analysing and sharing data are linked tightly to monitoring activities which highlight strengths and weaknesses in pupils' skills across year groups. In these ways, leaders acquire an acute understanding of pupils' achievement throughout the academy and establish clear priorities for long-term improvement plans.
- Training, procedures for managing staff performance linked to the national *Teachers' Standards*, and improvement planning are closely entwined. These arrangements have resulted in significant improvements to teaching. Some leaders are undertaking additional university-led studies, linked to their areas of responsibility, to enhance their skills.
- Staff share senior leaders' ambition to take teaching and achievement forward and rise to challenges well; subject and other leaders support senior leaders strongly. The Early Years Foundation Stage is very well led. Other leaders below senior level have considerably improved their understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility this year through undertaking detailed monitoring activities. Their secure understanding of data on attainment and progress helps them pinpoint the steps they need to take next to improve pupils' achievement.
- The AS resource base is led exceptionally well. Staff are appropriately trained. Specific approaches for working with autistic pupils are established and fully shared with senior leaders and governors.

- Gaps in the achievement of different groups have been closed or substantially reduced. Targets for pupils' performance in Years 2 and 6 were at least matched and some exceeded in 2013. Additional funding (pupil premium) has been used very effectively: for example, to ensure eligible pupils among new arrivals quickly improve their English language skills from well-directed support.
- The academy trust holds leaders closely to account through, for example, a series of very frequent visits during which pupils' performance is very closely checked. The support it provides has been increasingly effective as it has steadily developed useful contacts with other academies and schools through which best practice is shared.
- The range of learning opportunities serves pupils well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well in lessons, residential visits, diversity weeks and through the exploration of different cultures.
- The academy uses the national sports funding for primary schools suitably. It has been used, for example, to subsidise after-school activities for vulnerable pupils, to engage inactive pupils in lunchtime clubs, to employ specialist coaches and to provide training for staff. Consequently, pupils' physical fitness and well-being have benefited.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Key governors share senior leaders' ambition to make the academy outstanding, know their roles well, and hold senior and other leaders to account for the academy's performance. They show a good range of expertise and use their knowledge well to support leaders and to drive improvement.
 - Governors know how well the academy is doing. They undertake regular focused visits to lessons and examine pupils' books and the quality of teachers' marking. Link governors meet with staff regularly. At their meetings they listen to pupil councillors and receive useful presentations from subject leaders on what pupils are being taught.
 - Governors understand the data describing pupils' attainment and progress well. They have a clear understanding of how well different groups of pupils are achieving and which aspects of pupils' skills need further development.
 - They have spent pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that it has the required impact on raising the achievement of eligible pupils.
 - Their effective support for, and challenge to, senior leaders help the academy to set very precise goals for the future.
 - Governors are suitably aware of procedures for managing staff performance and use the information which they receive appropriately to check whether the principal, other leaders and staff have fully achieved their targets in ensuring pupils achieve well before agreeing to pay rises.
 - Governors ensure that current government requirements for safeguarding are met.

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	138888
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	440119

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	492
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Kelly
Principal	Johanne Clifton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0121 675 2800
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