

The Bromley-Pensnett Primary School

Bromley, Pensnett, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 4PJ

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's determination and high expectations have been central to the success of the school. Effective support from other leaders has secured significant improvements to the quality of teaching.
- An inclusive and caring ethos pervades the school. Staff are attentive and support pupils' emotional well-being effectively. Pupils who have complex needs are managed superbly.
- Since the school opened as an academy, outcomes have risen. Pupils' starting points on entry to school are typically low. Good teaching enables pupils to progress well.
- Leaders have put a strong focus on the wider curriculum. This is particularly the case in science and religious education, where pupils' knowledge and understanding develop well.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. In 2018, attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check and the Year 6 reading test was above the national average.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. However, the level of challenge is inconsistent, particularly in the teaching of reasoning.
- Pupils enjoy writing at length and across a range of genres. Punctuation, spelling and handwriting are not applied consistently and accurately in pupils' writing.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Early years is well led. Staff in Nursery and Reception manage children's emotions and behaviour very well. Activities provide challenge and children make good progress.
- Last academic year, the pupil premium funding was put to good use. Most disadvantaged pupils benefited well from the school's strategies. However, leaders have been slow to implement their pupil premium plan this academic year.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium has been partly effective. However, pupils do not receive a broad enough range of physical or sport-related extra-curricular activities.
- The local governing body generally provides appropriate challenge to school leaders. School improvement support commissioned by the trust has been effective, particularly in relation to developing the quality of teaching.
- The safeguarding culture in school is good. Staff take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Too many pupils are still away from school too often.
- The trust has not ensured close enough oversight of pre-appointment checks of staff.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain improvements in the teaching of writing and mathematics by ensuring that pupils:
 - are consistently challenged to apply their mathematical understanding through reasoning
 - apply their punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills accurately and consistently in their writing.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors and leaders initiate plans for the spending of additional funding in a timely way
 - building on the effective procedures for managing absence and providing more targeted support for families of those pupils who are persistently absent
 - making sure that the trust has a closer oversight of the pre-appointment checks that are carried out on staff.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the school opened as an academy, the headteacher has played a pivotal role in improving the school. She and the deputy headteacher make a strong team and have a firm and thorough understanding of the quality of teaching across the school. Other leaders also take initiative for school improvement. They know their areas of responsibility well and have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have created a positive culture of mutual support and improvement among staff. They share a clear sense of direction and a desire to get the best out of pupils, both academically and socially. Staff are proud to work at the school and feel that senior leaders support their development through a range of training opportunities. Several staff commented on leaders' sensitive consideration of staff's work-life balance.
- Teachers are closely involved in the evaluation of their own teaching. Some of the checks on the quality of work in pupils' books are done jointly with leaders. This helps hold teachers to account in a collaborative and professional way.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and focused. Leaders use the thorough information they have about pupils' progress to identify strengths and put in place relevant priorities for improvement. Actions to address these priorities are successfully achieved through the school's improvement plan. For example, in 2017, attainment in reading dipped slightly at the end of key stage 2. A rapid response has enabled reading attainment in 2018 to rise to be comfortably above the national average.
- Pupils really enjoy some of their wider curriculum opportunities. This is testament to leaders' commitment to developing the school curriculum. Progression of learning in science and religious education is a notable strength. Leaders recognised that pupils would benefit from broader cultural experiences and, as a result, regular curriculum trips beyond pupils' local community were planned. For example, visits to different places of worship have deepened pupils' awareness of other religions. Pupils are being prepared well for life in modern Britain and are tolerant of the beliefs of others.
- Leaders and staff provide very good support to vulnerable pupils and those who have complex needs. This includes pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. These pupils are well catered for in class and through additional support. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is new to post, but already has a clear view of the quality of provision and what needs to be improved.
- The multi-academy trust commissioned a review of pupil premium funds in January 2018. Leaders responded well to this review and adapted plans to make them more targeted. Several of the strategies to support disadvantaged pupils have had a positive impact on their progress. For example, additional support for disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 phonics was very successful in 2018. However, there is currently no pupil premium plan in place to highlight exactly how the funding will be spent this academic year. The positive work that took place in the spring and summer terms of 2018 has lost momentum.
- The PE and sport premium funding has had some success. Staff have improved their confidence in teaching gymnastics through training. The use of a sports coach at

lunchtimes has helped to raise pupils' physical activity levels at social times. However, leaders are yet to use the funding to its fullest extent. The range of extra-curricular physical activity and sports clubs is limited.

Governance of the school

- The multi-academy trust is in a period of transition with changes being made to the arrangements for governance. The trust has instigated the changes to refine and improve the effectiveness of governance across the trust. Previously, the trust had a local governing body for each school. This academic year, a new executive governance group has been put in place. This group will provide governance to The Bromley-Pensnett Primary School and one other school in the trust. It is too early to evaluate the impact of this new structure.
- The chair of the previous local governing body and the chair of the new executive governance group have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Minutes of past meetings and school visit notes demonstrate that governors hold leaders appropriately to account.
- School improvement support commissioned by the trust has been effective. The school improvement adviser provides a high level of challenge and support to leaders, particularly around the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- The trust commissioned an effective review of pupil premium spending in January 2018. However, during the transition in governance in recent months, it has not capitalised on this review. As a result, there is no clear plan for the spending of additional funding early in this academic year.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff put a firm focus on keeping pupils safe. The designated safeguarding leads follow up concerns tenaciously and their record keeping is thorough. They do not hesitate in challenging the local authority when they want a concern looked at more seriously. Training for staff is regular and relevant. Staff are clear about their responsibilities and have a good understanding of the changes to the statutory guidelines, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018). The culture for safeguarding is a positive feature of the school.
- Pre-appointment checks on the suitability of staff are carried out thoroughly. However, the method for recording these checks is not as organised as it should be. The trust has not ensured that there is sufficient oversight of this aspect of safeguarding.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. A thoughtful curriculum and assembly programme enables pupils to learn about different aspects of safety on a regular basis. Pupils are clear about how to stay safe on the internet and their right to contact NSPCC's Childline if they ever have concerns outside school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has steadily improved since the school opened as an academy. Teachers' questioning is a notable strength. Well-planned questioning helps to deepen pupils' understanding when learning new ideas and clarifies misconceptions when required. The use of consistent classroom approaches leads to a purposeful and efficient working atmosphere. Pupils are settled and work hard.
- The quality of staff training has had a positive impact on classroom practice. Swift strategies are put in place to support weaker teaching. Newly qualified teachers are supported well. Teaching assistants play an important role in pupils' learning. They achieve a good balance of guiding pupils, while also encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Reading is taught effectively. Pupils progress well and most importantly, they enjoy reading. Staff's good subject knowledge and teaching of phonics provide pupils with the skills to use their understanding of letter sounds to read new words efficiently in the early part of their journey in school. In key stage 2, the new whole-class book approach captures pupils' attention and helps all pupils to access age-appropriate texts. Follow-up activities successfully develop pupils' comprehension skills. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils came to life when discussing their book, 'Pig Heart Boy' by Malorie Blackman. They had an excellent understanding of the text and enjoyed finding definitions of new vocabulary.
- Pupils are given regular opportunities to write across a range of genres. Most pupils make good progress, but the development of their punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills is inconsistent across the school. These aspects are not taught precisely enough and pupils sometimes get into bad habits in their writing. A new spelling approach has been introduced, but has not been in place long enough to become fully embedded.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved over the last year. Teachers provide more regular opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their understanding using pictures and pieces of apparatus. Pupils' reasoning skills are starting to develop in some year groups. However, pupils are not challenged consistently well, particularly in relation to using and developing their reasoning skills. When this occurs, pupils continue to do work that comes easily to them, rather than applying their understanding to more difficult tasks.
- Staff's subject knowledge in science is good. Lessons are interesting and pupils really enjoy the subject. Pupils take part in regular experiments and, as result, their enquiry skills develop well. Pupils' knowledge in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education, develops well over time.
- In-class support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective and helps them make good progress. Staff are sensitive to their needs, especially where pupils have emotional needs.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders and staff have created an ethos in which pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's work. Staff respond sensitively to pupils, particularly those who have emotional and social needs. Mutual respect is prevalent among staff and pupils. Pupils work hard in lessons and are proud of their school.
- The school has put a strong focus on the teaching of religious education. Leaders recognised that pupils would benefit from learning about other cultures beyond their own experiences. Pupils visit different places of worship and learn about a range of faiths. This work is having a positive impact because pupils demonstrate mature and tolerant views about the wider world.
- The school values of 'respect', 'trust', and 'working together' are well known by pupils. Staff use assemblies and class time to talk to pupils about their rights and responsibilities. This contributes positively to their understanding of making appropriate choices in school and in life.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. A thoughtful programme of activities teaches pupils about danger. The pupil 'safeguarding board' is proactive and takes responsibility for raising awareness of safety with other pupils.
- Leaders are yet to fully exploit the PE and sport premium funding. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to take part in extra-curricular clubs with a physical, health- or sports-related focus.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times is impressive. They move around school sensibly and respond well to instructions from staff. A positive focus on rewards and clear sanctions enables pupils to know exactly where they stand.
- There are some pupils who have very complex emotional and behavioural needs. These pupils are managed well by staff. Leaders record incidents well and then put in place clear actions to provide additional support for these pupils. The school's nurture programme and the use of external agencies have helped to secure improvements to behaviour over time.
- The number of permanent and fixed-term exclusions remains above the national average. Decisions to exclude pupils are not taken lightly by leaders. It is a relatively small group of pupils who have been subject to exclusions at the school. Exclusions are often a last resort where the safety of staff or pupils is at risk. Support plans for pupils at risk of exclusion are thorough. During the inspection, leaders gave examples of where they have worked closely with families to find more appropriate and specialist provision for pupils.
- Procedures for managing and analysing absence are well organised. This is particularly

the case for the small number of children who may be missing education. Leaders are quick to call parents and carers on the first day of pupils' absence and make home visits where necessary. If they cannot locate pupils, referrals are made to the local authority, or to the police, where more urgent action is required.

- Absence rates remain above the national average. The absence rate of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils does have a negative impact on the school's overall level of absence, as does that of children missing education, who must be kept on roll until they are located. Leaders continually reflect on how they can improve attendance rates. Some families of pupils who are persistently absent need to be targeted and supported even more thoroughly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Since the school opened as an academy, outcomes have improved across the school. A relatively high number of pupils enter the school with skills below a level that is typical for their age. Good teaching enables pupils to progress well as they move through the school.
- Phonics outcomes are rising. In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national average.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 are strong. The proportions of pupils attaining the expected and higher standards have been broadly in line with national figures for two years. In 2017, attainment in mathematics dipped slightly, but it recovered well in 2018.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well across the school. The school's assessment information shows that disadvantaged pupils generally make good progress. At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading and mathematics was just below that of other pupils nationally. However, by the end of key stage 2 in mathematics, disadvantaged pupils' attainment is not high enough.
- Outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were not as high as they should have been in 2017. However, this issue was rectified in 2018. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the reading test was above the national average. While attainment in mathematics is improving, there is still not a consistent level of challenge. Pupils' reasoning skills are not sufficiently developed.
- The proportions of pupils attaining the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics are gradually rising in key stage 2.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 in grammar, punctuation and spelling has been below the national average for two years. While pupils' writing books show that they make good progress, their punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills are not applied consistently in their writing.
- Work in pupils' books shows that their knowledge and understanding are developing well in other subjects. This is particularly the case in science and in religious education.

Early years provision

Good

- Relationships between staff and children in early years are a strength. Staff are attentive and meet children’s emotional needs very well. In Nursery, children are very well settled into the start of their life at the school.
- Children are encouraged to have good manners and behave well. Staff model their expectations and put in place consistent routines, so that children are clear about their own responsibilities. There is a calm and productive learning environment.
- A high number of children enter early years with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below the levels typical for their age. Strong subject knowledge and good teaching from staff enable children to progress well across the different areas of learning. Basic skills, such as phonics, are taught well.
- Staff are constantly seeking ways to develop children’s language and communication skills. A wide range of vocabulary is displayed in the classroom and outdoor area. Furthermore, adults are good at sharing new words and using questioning to extend children’s vocabulary.
- Learning activities are interesting and challenging. Staff ask well-planned questions to help deepen children’s thinking in their play and in the focused work that they do. For example, during the inspection, children solved a problem involving the flow of water along a drainpipe. Staff posed the question, ‘How could you make the water go faster?’ This helped to extend children’s thinking and curiosity.
- Children really enjoy the forest activities that take place on the school site. They are given high-quality opportunities to explore, cooperate with others and be creative. Safe low-level climbing plays an important role in children’s physical development.
- The early years leader has a good understanding of the provision. She supports other staff well and has a very clear view of the progress that children make. There are positive working relationships with external agencies and parents to further support children’s development.
- Children make good progress, and up until 2018, the proportion achieving a good level of development was rising each year. It dropped well below the national average in 2018. However, this cohort’s starting point was lower than usual. Work in their books and the school’s assessment information show that they still made good progress across the year.
- All the statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	141979
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10053419

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	David Sheldon
Headteacher	Helen Tomlinson
Telephone number	01384 816865
Website	www.bromleyprimary.org.uk
Email address	info@bromley.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- A large majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school is a sponsored academy and is part of the DRB Ignite multi-academy trust. The school converted to become an academy in October 2015. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2014, it was judged to require improvement.

- The chief executive officer and the school improvement team provide strategic support and challenge. This includes aspects such as finance, human resources, leadership, the quality of teaching, and performance data. The multi-academy trust commissions termly review visits by a school improvement adviser.
- There is a local governance group at the school which takes responsibility for challenging and supporting leaders to develop educational outcomes for pupils. The local governance group has responsibility for two schools in the trust.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 30 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with two groups of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at social times and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, as well as other senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with two members of the local governing body. He also met with the chief executive officer, the chair of the trust and three school improvement representatives from the multi-academy trust.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation. These included assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is monitored and the school's improvement plans.
- There were not enough responses to evaluate Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. Inspectors considered three free-text responses from parents. They also talked to parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Matt Meckin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Walker	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Hughes	Ofsted Inspector

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