

Baldwins Gate CofE (VC) Primary School

Tollgate Avenue, Baldwins Gate, Newcastle, ST5 5DF

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
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 good school.

- In the last year the attainment and progress of pupils throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics have improved considerably.
- Nearly all pupils make at least the progress expected nationally, and a good number in all year groups do better, thanks to consistently good teaching.
- Pupils are well cared for, have enthusiastic attitudes to learning and behave well.
- Pupils are confident, thoughtful, enjoy school, feel safe and take their responsibilities seriously, especially for learning.
- Initiatives to raise the quality of teaching and learning have proved successful.
- Pupils enjoy an imaginative, interesting range of activities throughout the day. This contributes strongly to their good spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
- Governance has improved and is helping to improve the school. Some individual governors work with pupils and help them learn, for example by hearing them read.
- The school is led well by a caring headteacher, who sets an excellent example through her own teaching and is strongly supported by staff and parents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- When teachers mark pupils' work they do not always correct basic mistakes, or tell them clearly what they should learn or do next.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not always give the most capable pupils demanding tasks quickly enough. This means pupils sometimes repeat work they have already done.
- The leaders in charge of subject areas do not have enough expertise or opportunities to check on teaching and learning in a way that helps to improve the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons or part-lessons taught by seven teachers.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, members of the senior management team and subject leaders, governors, the office manager and an officer from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work. He examined safeguarding arrangements as well as other documents including policies, procedures, school development plans and self-evaluation, external evaluations of the school's effectiveness, and a range of pupils' work.
- The inspector took account of 20 responses to the online Parent View survey, as well as one written response.
- The inspector also examined questionnaire responses from eight members of staff.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Baldwins Gate CofE (VC) Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British, the remainder coming from a range of other ethnic heritages.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action, and by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs, are below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is much lower than the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Children in the school's Nursery are taught with the Reception class each morning.
- The main school is organised into three mixed-age classes: Years 1/2, Years 3/4 and Years 5/6.
- There is childcare on the school site before and after the school day, but it is privately managed and was not included in the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - developing the effectiveness of marking by always rigorously correcting basic errors and clearly identifying what pupils need to do to move forwards in their work
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English
 - ensuring that teachers provide further demanding tasks as soon as possible for pupils who are ready to move ahead, especially in mathematics.
- Develop the leadership roles and responsibilities of middle managers by:
 - providing training and opportunities for them to monitor teaching and learning, so they support colleagues and contribute to school improvement more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress in all age groups has improved in the past year. It is now good and is still improving. Most pupils make at least the progress that they should. However, achievement is not yet outstanding. In the 2012 national tests, not enough more-able pupils reached the higher standards of which they were capable.
- After entering the school with skills and understanding that are broadly at the levels expected for their age, most children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress is especially good in speech and language development. In recent years, achievement in the main school was variable in reading, writing and mathematics. Since 2011, though, progress has speeded up in all year groups with a corresponding improvement in pupils' attainment.
- At the end of Year 2 in summer 2012, well over half of the pupils had made good progress in reading and mathematics. Half had made good progress in writing. This trend is continuing in the present Years 1 and 2, where achievement is now consistently good.
- Progress in Years 3 to 6 required improvement in recent years. It is now good. Most of the pupils in Year 6 are now on track to achieve higher standards than usual for their age. This positive picture is also repeated in Years 3, 4 and 5.
- All groups of pupils now achieve equally well. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils from different ethnic heritages and the very small number of pupils entitled to the pupil premium. The difference between the performance of girls and boys in recent times has been eliminated, and now they make equally good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. Younger pupils are making great strides in their understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) in Reception and Years 1 and 2, which is helping them to move ahead quickly. This was confirmed by the good results of the recent national phonics screening test for pupils in Year 1.
- Older pupils show great pleasure in the wide range of books that they read regularly, especially in Year 6. Pupils demonstrate excellent comprehension and are developing good expressive reading styles. They are excellent role models for the younger pupils. The regular and helpful monitoring of reading indicates a strong partnership between the school and parents, who feel that their children make consistently good progress throughout the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good, creative and stimulating teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes provides a wealth of opportunities for learning that are set at the right level for all individuals, including the youngest in the Nursery and the older children, who have more formal class work in the afternoons.
- Teaching in the main school is consistently good. Individual lessons are occasionally outstanding. Large mixed-age classes are very well organised, mostly into smaller groups. They often have more than one teacher, and usually additional assistants and volunteers. All these adults help pupils to learn, and particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Frequent, personalised help and support ensure that each individual's particular learning, physical or behavioural needs are met well.

- A particular strength of the best teaching is the high level of challenge to pupils' thinking and speaking skills. This helps pupils in all subjects, and supports their personal development very well. Such challenge was observed in lessons with two different teachers in Years 3/4, firstly on news reporting, where pupils learned the importance of 'VAP' (voice, audience, purpose). Similarly in this class, pupils were encouraged to consider 'resilience' by sticking at tasks, training their memory and working cooperatively with a partner.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Although teachers plan meticulously for the needs of all pupils, they sometimes do not introduce the more demanding activities they have planned quickly enough. This is especially so for more-able pupils in mathematics. Consequently, some pupils are repeating work instead of moving ahead. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to write extensively in subjects other than English.
- A new marking policy has been introduced but is not yet being used consistently. Some teachers give much praise and tell pupils what they can do correctly, but do not spell out their next steps for learning precisely enough. Some marking also fails to correct basic punctuation and spelling errors.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in all parts of the school. They behave safely, including in the many exciting practical activities provided, such as the cooking club. Examples of silly behaviour are infrequent.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes mix happily together and soon learn the routines concerning their behaviour. They understand very quickly what is expected of them.
- Pupils have consistently good attitudes to learning. They talk with great enthusiasm about the wide range of subjects they enjoy, especially their music tuition and educational visits.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of different kinds of bullying, including any that might be encountered through the internet. They feel that there is little bullying in the school and say, for example, 'We just walk away,' and, 'It's just people not wanting to be friends any more.'
- The school has good links with external professionals when specialised services are needed. These, for example, help to support pupils and families who are in difficult circumstances, or pupils who have difficulty in managing their own behaviour.
- Attendance and punctuality are both excellent and have been for some years. Exclusions from school are rare.
- Parents and pupils alike, through school questionnaires, say that behaviour is well managed and that the great majority of pupils behave consistently well. This was confirmed unanimously by the online responses in Parent View.

The leadership and management are good

- The effectiveness of leadership and management is enhanced considerably by the headteacher's modelling of the professional standards she expects. This is shown by her often excellent

teaching, and her drive to promote pupils' good achievement and mature personal development. The staff work very effectively as a team in support of this vision, and their morale is high.

- Self-evaluation is rigorous and demanding. School leaders fully recognised the need to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, and have been tackling these weaknesses as a matter of urgency. As a result, teaching and achievement have both improved considerably since the last inspection and the improvement has accelerated recently.
 - Much greater attention is now paid to identifying the personal learning needs of all pupils and tracking their progress to identify where additional support is necessary. This and present evidence of further improvement indicate the school's good capacity to continue to improve.
 - Pupils enjoy a much-improved range of exciting and demanding activities that underpin the staff's high expectations of behaviour and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They include assemblies where pupils are encouraged to reflect on important issues, and numerous opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in the performing arts.
 - The monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders links the needs of the school closely to the targets set for individual teachers' improvement. Management responsibilities are now more widely spread among the staff. However, while middle leaders have enthusiasm for their roles, they do not yet have full confidence in taking initiatives and leading improvement. Their experience and training in monitoring teaching and learning are limited.
 - The school has excellent relationships with a very active and supportive parents' body, who give consistently high praise for all aspects of its work. The school has had the benefit of much good support from the local authority, especially in guiding the development of better teaching.
 - The governing body, school leaders and staff promote equal opportunities and harmonious relationships well. This is shown by the emphasis on personal development and the work to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well, regardless of gender, ethnic heritage, disability or special educational needs. For example, the funding derived from the pupil premium has been used well to give eligible pupils one-to-one support in developing their reading skills.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - has improved because the governing body has a much better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
 - sets suitably challenging targets for the headteacher's performance, but plays less of a role in supporting the management of teaching
 - monitors the achievement of all groups of pupils closely to ensure equality, and to check on the school's effectiveness as a whole
 - gives safeguarding a high priority and ensures that all statutory requirements are met.
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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	124290
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	400352

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Barr
Headteacher	Claire Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
Telephone number	01782 680649
Fax number	01782 681900
Email address	headteacher@baldwinsgate.staffs.sch.uk

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