

Delves Junior School

Bell Lane, Walsall, WS5 4PU

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

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.

- Pupils achieve well. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 has risen in the last two years. Rates of progress have also improved.
- Teachers make learning fun and this encourages pupils to work hard.
- Teachers generally match work well to meet pupils' needs. This is particularly the case in Year 6 where some teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers make careful use of ongoing assessment in lessons to help pupils learn well. This is backed up by good marking which provides pupils with detailed guidance on how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve further.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes contribute well to their successful learning. Pupils enjoy school, feel safe and behave respectfully to each other and to staff. Relationships are good and the school is a very harmonious community.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have tackled the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection well. Actions taken as a result of close checks on pupils' progress have improved pupils' achievement, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Training and work with consultants have contributed well to improving teaching, the use of assessment and the effectiveness of tracking procedures.
- Parents highly commend the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders have not yet secured teaching of a consistently outstanding quality. Occasionally, in Years 3 to 5, teachers do not target questions well enough to ensure all pupils are actively involved in lessons.
- There are occasions when work is not always planned sharply enough to ensure disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs make fast progress in lessons.
- Occasionally, in Years 3 to 5, teachers do not ensure that the work which more-able pupils undertake independently is hard enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons taught by 15 teachers. Two of these lessons were observed together with senior leaders. In addition eight short visits were made to lessons taught by teachers and/or teaching assistants.
- Samples of pupils' work in writing and mathematics from the previous school year were analysed. An inspector talked to a few pupils from Year 6 about their favourite books and listened to them reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, three governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 questionnaires completed by staff. There were insufficient responses from parents to the online questionnaire for these to be recorded on 'Parent View'. However, responses to the school's own recent survey of parents' views about the school were analysed.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; school improvement plans; the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; consultants' reports; and policies, procedures and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Boyle

Additional Inspector

Jenny Batelen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- Just over 50% of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The remaining pupils are mainly of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. In this school, this extra government funding is currently received for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding and help pupils to make faster progress by:
 - making sure teachers always target questions well to keep all pupils actively involved in learning
 - improving the sharpness of teachers' planning to ensure that the needs of disabled pupils and all groups of pupils with special educational needs are consistently well met.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels by:
 - ensuring that work is always well matched to the needs of more-able pupils in Years 3 to 5
 - planning a wide range of opportunities across the curriculum to enable these pupils to develop their skills to the full.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The school's very rigorous checks show that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the start of Year 3 varies from year to year and is presently average. However, attainment on entry was below average for current Year 5 and Year 6 pupils and very recent Year 6 groups.
- Attainment in these subjects by the end of Year 6 has risen to average in the last two years and in 2012 it was at its highest level for five years. The rise in attainment is most noticeable in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils in 2012 who exceeded the progress expected of them in mathematics was above average.
- Preliminary results for the 2013 national tests show that these standards have been maintained, and pupils in the current Year 6 classes are working at slightly above-average levels in reading and mathematics.
- In 2012, in Year 6, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium was lower than that of other pupils in the year group, about two terms behind in English and one and a half terms behind in mathematics. However, from their starting points, these pupils made similar progress to other pupils in both subjects. This gap in attainment is closing steadily for pupils in all year groups, including Year 6. This is because leaders check carefully that the actions they take to raise these pupils' attainment are very effective.
- Most disabled pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs achieve well by the end of Year 6. This is particularly the case for statemented pupils, some of whom make rapid progress due to the intensive support they receive.
- However, fewer pupils than is nationally the case achieve at the higher Levels 5 and 6. Lesson planning does not always ensure more-able pupils in Years 3 to 5 are fully challenged and there are few purposeful opportunities across the curriculum for more-able pupils to extend their research and investigative skills.
- Across the school most groups of pupils make equally good progress, although the picture is not quite so strong for Pakistani pupils, especially the small minority with poor levels of attendance.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The teaching is good in most lessons, and in some lessons in Year 6 it is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and know how individual pupils learn best.
- Teachers' enthusiasm, ready encouragement and effective mix of methods capture pupils' attention and ensure that they find their learning enjoyable. Teachers explain tasks clearly and make good use of ongoing assessment in lessons to clarify for pupils the next steps in their learning. Nearly all lessons move at a brisk pace because routines and relationships are very well established and teachers recognise when pupils have mastered an idea and are ready to move on to the next task.
- These strengths in teaching ensure that lessons run smoothly and interruptions are very rare. Pupils are expected to concentrate and to work hard. They make good use of paired partner routines to discuss new ideas.
- Teachers apply the school's marking policy consistently and, in Year 6, marking is of a particularly high standard. Pupils are given regular, detailed feedback which leaves them in no doubt about what levels they are working at, how well they are progressing over time and their mini-targets provide them with short-term goals to aim at.
- In the best lessons, for example in Year 6, teachers' high expectations for pupils' progress are reflected in the challenging work they provide for pupils of all abilities. In otherwise successful lessons in Years 3 to 5, this feature is less evident, including in the work pupils undertake on

their own.

- While most pupils respond well to the teacher's questions, teachers do not always target questioning well enough to ensure all pupils, including disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs, are always actively involved in learning.
- Statemented pupils are often provided with expert support but work for other categories of disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs is occasionally not planned sharply enough to ensure they make fast progress in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils report that they enjoy school and that teachers make learning fun. Attendance levels have risen considerably in the last three years and are a little above average.
- Pupils' behaviour is nearly always good and is, on a few occasions, exemplary both in lessons and around school. Pupils display high levels of courtesy to each other, staff and visitors. They respect the clear routines, comply with staff requests without fuss and help to ensure interior areas of the school are kept clean by changing their footwear before going outside at playtimes.
- Pupils concentrate well, work hard in lessons and persevere. Their very positive attitudes support their good progress, although, on a few occasions when less involved in question and answer activities, some pupils are content to sit passively.
- Pupils' good sense of teamwork was evident during the inspection not only in group-work but during a reading lesson where pupils unobtrusively helped each other out if they had difficulties pronouncing unfamiliar words.
- Pupils have few concerns about behaviour. There have been no exclusions in the last three years. Pupils report that bullying very rarely occurs and say that fallouts which sometimes occur are quickly resolved before incidents can escalate, often with the help of the learning mentor and Year 6 pupils on safety patrol. Pupils are trained well in how to stay safe and are alert to potential dangers such as cyber-bullying.
- All of the 160 parents who responded to the school's recent questionnaire stated that their children are safe in school and almost all reported that staff manage pupils' behaviour well.
- Pupils of different ethnic origins work and play well together. They enjoy playtimes and, spontaneously, show initiative in making up their own team games for those pupils who particularly enjoy physical activities, such as hopscotch and balancing on the upturned tyres trim-trail.
- The school promotes pupils' sense of community well through the active school council and the house system. Pupils value the house-points they receive for good work and behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- Pupils' improved achievement is underpinned by the close checks senior and key middle leaders make on information collected not only on pupils' academic progress but also on other important matters, such as teachers' performance and pupils' attendance.
- This detailed information is thoroughly analysed and cross-checked with regular, useful reports provided by local authority and other external consultants. Consequently, the school knows itself well, understands what its priorities for immediate action are, and targets resources sensibly to tackle areas of weakness. This, for example, has enabled leaders to implement a series of well-judged measures to improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics.
- Data on pupils' performance are shared very effectively with teachers, who have a clear awareness of the levels at which pupils are working and their accountability for ensuring pupils' good progress. Staff morale is strong because teachers appreciate the consistency of leaders' expectations for their performance and they know that they too are expected to make an important contribution to the robustness of the school's management systems.
- Leaders' methodical approach, as reflected for example in their leadership logs, has ensured that

good progress has been made in tackling the key issues identified at the previous inspection. Although leaders have not yet secured teaching of a consistently outstanding quality, they have used training very effectively to develop teachers' expertise, for example in assessment moderation, to establish firm baselines for measuring and charting pupils' progress.

- Leaders are currently taking steps to improve the curriculum for disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs. In all other respects, provision for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is good. Assessment information is used well to tackle potential discrimination. Resources have been used wisely to improve the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Small group and after-school tuition has been particularly effective in this respect.
- While the curriculum is very effective in promoting pupils' basic skills and offers some useful enrichment activities for pupils in sport and music, such as guitar tuition, there are few planned opportunities for more-able pupils to extend their skills.
- The school fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Key cultural events are celebrated, the school is a very harmonious community and pupils participate enthusiastically in fund-raising events.
- Recent funding for physical education is being targeted well to strengthen the curriculum, through using a specialist teacher to spread good practice and by employing external partners to teach pupils new skills, for example hockey. This funding is being supplemented by additional monies from the school budget.
- The school's steady improvement has enhanced its popularity among parents and enabled the local authority to reduce its support to an appropriate 'light-touch' level.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have improved their effectiveness since the previous inspection. Their evaluation of the school's work to improve achievement is well informed and accurate and they know what needs to be done next to raise pupils' attainment further.
 - Governors have examined the progress of different groups of pupils and checked that pupil premium funding is being spent wisely and is raising achievement for eligible pupils.
 - Governors make clear links between the performance of teachers and senior leaders and outcomes for pupils and ensure that salary progression is used appropriately.
 - Governors are not complacent. They check the school's safeguarding arrangements regularly and have undertaken a programme of training to develop their skills to ensure they hold leaders closely to account.

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	104170
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	426950

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Pulford
Headteacher	Victoria Russell
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 January 2012
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