

Thameside Primary School

Colman Close, Abingdon, OX14 5NL

Inspection dates

6–7 March 2014

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 make good progress from low starting points so that they reach average standards by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Lessons are wellplanned and many include a rich variety of activities.
- Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception class are good so that children benefit from a strong start in their development.
- The school's leaders, well supported by governors, have been successful in raising achievement. They are taking effective actions to bring about further improvements.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They show respect to one another and to adults. They feel safe and their behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Individual pupils' needs are very well understood and skilled support is quickly put in place when necessary.
- Governors are effective and show a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The school provides pupils with an interesting range of subjects, topics and experiences which ensure they enjoy their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils to make the best possible progress. The strengths present in the school are not sufficiently shared among all teachers.
- The rates of progress that pupils make vary between classes. In some classes they make very rapid progress but not in others.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 14 lessons, of which three were jointly observed with the headteacher. They also visited an assembly.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in their lessons and carried out a detailed scrutiny of their written work.
- Inspectors held meetings with two groups of pupils, and talked with pupils in their lessons and around the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities and four members of the governing body. A telephone discussion was held with the school's improvement consultant from the local authority.
- A variety of school documentation was examined, including records of current pupils' progress, self-evaluation summaries and improvements plans, behaviour and attendance logs, the sports premium action plan, minutes of governors' meetings and records relating to safeguarding and to the management of staff performance.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors took account of the questionnaires completed by 21 staff and of the responses to the school's parental surveys. They also spoke with several parents and carers who were present on the school site during the inspection to gather their views on the school. The number of responses to the online Parent View questionnaire was too low to be taken into account.

Inspection team

Sean Thornton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Shela Rowan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average but increasing.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional funding called the pupil premium is above average. In this school this is provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care or those who have a parent or carer in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is average. The proportion of pupils who receive extra help or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A privately run pre-school is based on the school site but did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching by ensuring that:
 - pupils in all classes are given work that is set at the right level to ensure rapid progress
 - all teachers maintain a good pace throughout their lessons
 - the good practice in questioning that is present in some areas of the school is implemented by all staff.
- Ensure that all pupils make at least good progress throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are rising for all groups of pupils because of good teaching and rigorous checking of pupils' progress across the school.
- Children enter the nursery with skills and abilities that are below the levels expected for their age in all areas of their development. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage because of individual support and well-chosen learning activities. The school's projections show that by the end of the Reception Year pupils are now almost reaching average expectations.
- In the past, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been below average. However, there is now much improvement and the school's tracking information and work seen in pupils' books show that pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are making faster progress and that attainment is improving.
- Published results show that by the end of Year 6, pupils reached broadly average standards though there was some variation due to the very small numbers of pupils in these classes. In 2013 progress was good in writing and mathematics but slower in reading. Pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are making good progress in reading as well as in writing and demonstrate rapid progress in mathematics.
- Throughout the school pupils benefit from a structured programme that helps them to recognise the sounds letters make (phonics). The results of the Year 1 phonics check were below average in 2013 but the school's records indicate that since then there has been considerable improvement and standards are now average.
- The progress made by pupils in different classes is at least good, and in some it is outstanding.
- Pupils' literacy is well developed in the various subjects that they study. Pupils read widely and use punctuation and grammar correctly. Standards of handwriting, however, are variable.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the extra funding called the pupil premium make good progress. This is because the school uses this funding to provide small-group teaching and one-to-one support as well as ensuring that these pupils are able to participate fully in the school's enrichment activities. In 2013 the attainment of these pupils was higher than that of other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in both English and mathematics. This is because their individual needs are carefully analysed when they join the school and they benefit from appropriate skilled teaching.
- The good tracking of pupils' progress means no group of pupils is left behind so that the school promotes equality of opportunity effectively.
- The school is using the primary school sports funding to employ a specialist sports coach and this is providing pupils with a broader range of sporting activities. An after-school sports club has been set up and sports teams now take part in competitions with nearby schools. Teachers are being trained as sports coaches to continue the sporting programme in the future.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding because all groups of pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because most lessons are planned to interest pupils and provide them with tasks that make them think and work hard.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff know the children well and help them to adapt to school routines. All adults show strong subject knowledge, and make good use of practical resources and regular checks on children's progress. Learning Journey booklets are used well to record their progress and are shared with parents and carers.

- Clear routines are well established in all classes and resources are well prepared so that time is not wasted when moving between activities. Lessons begin punctually and teachers show high expectations of their pupils.
- When teaching is most effective tasks are set at the right level and a good pace is maintained throughout the lesson so that pupils are engrossed in their learning. Teachers use probing questioning to check pupils' understanding before moving on to the next part of the lesson and are prepared to adapt their plans when this is needed. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson all pupils learnt how to construct and use bar charts because challenges were provided at a number of appropriate levels. They were able to apply their numerical skills to solve problems.
- In a small minority of lessons teaching is less effective and some pupils do not make as much progress as they should. This is why teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop their writing. In a very successful Year 6 lesson pupils developed the skills of persuasive writing by working in groups to write to school governors about an imaginary change to the timing of the school day. Thoughtful discussions and well-planned resources prepared the pupils for their final letters.
- The school is using a very wide range of strategies to improve the quality of reading: all classes in Key Stages 1 and 2 are named after authors; there is a weekly reading assembly and a reading club. Displays throughout the school promote reading and there are reading awards and prizes. Pupils spoke warmly about their enjoyment of reading and about its importance for their lives.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently and in detail so that pupils are clear on what is going well and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils are provided with clear written advice on improving their work in reading, writing and mathematics. These 'next steps' are displayed in all classrooms and pupils refer to them often in order to make progress.
- The school makes very good use of its outside areas to extend the range of activities that it provides. Some of these activities are targeted particularly at improving the interest and progress of boys.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and support pupils well. They work in effective partnerships with teachers and make a strong contribution to pupils' progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has worked hard to improve behaviour and has done so successfully
- In the large majority of lessons pupils concentrate well; attitudes to learning are very positive and pupils show a desire to learn. They participate well in classroom activities. When given extended tasks however, some pupils lose concentration and do not complete their work as well as they could.
- Pupils are well equipped for their lessons and settle very quickly to their work. Most books are neat and well kept.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour code and are clear about the system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils report that behaviour is usually good and that when there is poor behaviour it is dealt with quickly. This is confirmed by the school's records of behaviour.
- Pupils show courtesy to each other, to staff and to visitors. There is no evidence of litter and the many wall displays are respected.
- On the playground, pupils play well together and are considerate and kind to each other as they play.
- There are very few exclusions because staff are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour and consistently follow the school's agreed practices.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and have been taught how to keep themselves safe, for example on the roads and when online.

There are very few incidents of bullying and pupils are confident that when any occur they are dealt with promptly by staff. No form of discrimination is tolerated in the school.

- The school has put in place many strategies to improve attendance, which has increased and is now average.
- Pupils play an active role in the school and enjoy taking responsibilities, for example as house captains and members of the school council.
- In the school's own questionnaires, all staff and almost all parents and carers agree that pupils are well behaved as well as happy and safe at school.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because some pupils do not persevere in their lessons; they do not display a consistent desire to learn.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders set high expectations for staff and pupils. They are taking effective actions to raise pupils' attainment and standards of teaching. The headteacher's commitment to further improve all aspects of the school is shared by all staff and governors.
- The management of teaching and its impact on learning is good. Joint observations during the inspection showed that the school's judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate and include a variety of evidence.
- There is frequent checking of pupils' achievement and the results are used to produce detailed school improvement plans.
- School leaders work well together so that pupils' transitions between different classes are smooth. This ensures, for example, that pupils make a good start in Year 1.
- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good and ensure that children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- The results of the school's checks on teaching are used to provide a wide range of training, which responds to the needs of all staff.
- Teachers' performance is managed well. There is evidence that salary progression is taken very seriously and that it occurs only when merited by sustained good performance, linked to pupils' progress.
- The wide range of subjects and topics taught inspires pupils to learn well. Pupils develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills across subjects, with opportunities to solve problems and investigate questions. They extend their learning in areas such as science and humanities and develop their creativity through music, art and drama. An outstanding aspect of what the school offers is that all pupils in Key Stage 2 learn to play a stringed instrument funded by the school; pupils speak warmly of this enrichment.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively through all aspects of its work. Many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work, relationships and behaviour are included in their learning. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is broadened by the study of other faiths and by learning Japanese. In Year 6 all pupils visit an Oxford college to raise their aspirations and inspire them for the future.
- The local authority, through its improvement consultant, provides a wide range of support and challenge to the school. This includes support on school improvement, advice on improving teaching and working with the school's governors.
- Leadership and management are not outstanding because initiatives have not yet led to all pupils making the best possible progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well informed about all aspects of the school's work. Governors have carried out an audit of their effectiveness and drawn up an action plan with specific areas for development. They receive regular training on issues such as appointing staff and analysing pupils' progress. Governors have a very good understanding of how well the various groups of pupils are progressing and have a good understanding of how well the school is

performing in comparison to others. Minutes of meetings confirm that governors are prepared to challenge the headteacher and other school leaders, for example when analysing Key Stage 2 progress information. Governors are involved in checking the quality of teaching by visiting the school frequently and receiving detailed reports from the headteacher and other school leaders. They also play a full part in identifying and supporting initiatives for school improvement such as providing extra funds to increase staffing when they decide it is needed. Governors understand the importance of improving teachers' performance and the systems for doing so. They manage finances well and understand exactly how the sports funding and pupil premium are spent and the degree of their impact. Governors make sure the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all current government requirements.

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	123083
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	430605

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sharron Jenkinson
Headteacher	Joseph Rubba
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 March 2012
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