

Sulhamstead and Ufton Nernet Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Ufton Nernet, Reading, RG7 4HH

Inspection dates 12–13 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 in both their personal and academic development. Those with disabilities or special educational needs make outstanding progress because their needs are met exceptionally well. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English and mathematics.
- Attainment in writing lags behind reading because fewer pupils gain the higher level. In mathematics, pupils' practical and investigational skills are not as strong as their calculation skills.
- Teaching is consistently good. Staff have excellent relationships with their pupils and this spurs them on to do well. Staff generally have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, although work does not always offer sufficient challenge for the higher attainers particularly in writing.
- Teachers mark work thoroughly, although next steps in learning are not made sufficiently explicit in both writing and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well and they feel safe. They enjoy school and playing and learning together. Attendance is outstanding.
- The impact of leadership and management at all levels, including that of the governing body, is positive in bringing about improvement. The rigorous focus given to improving teaching and learning through the robust management of performance results in the school improving well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The quality of teaching and learning is good rather than outstanding. Standards at the end of Year 6 in writing are insufficiently high because too few pupils gain the higher level.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with one day's notice.
- The inspector observed teaching and learning led by five different teachers or practitioners.
- The inspector held meetings with a representative of the local authority, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, the questionnaires completed by 12 members of staff were also taken into account.
- As well as informal discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day, a meeting was held with parents and carers. In addition, account was taken of the 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation including the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's development plan, leaders' monitoring records and pupils' work.

Inspection team

Keith Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This heavily over-subscribed school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there is none who speaks English as an additional language.
- Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. These very few pupils are entitled to the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determine the minimum expectation for attainment and progress.
- Currently, there are almost twice as many boys as girls in the school.
- The pupils are taught in four classes. There is a separate Reception class, and three other classes that cater for pupils in Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4, and 5 and 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By January 2014, lift the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to reach the next step in their learning
 - ensuring that teachers consistently provide challenge for more able pupils in their writing activities
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across different subjects, particularly in their topic work
 - providing further opportunities to carry out mathematical investigations in order to develop pupils' practical mathematics' skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills on entry to Reception are broadly at expected levels. All groups of children make good progress in the Reception class because the curriculum is planned well and provides interesting and challenging activities that move learning forward well.
- The Reception class staff have high expectations of what the children can achieve. For example, when the teacher was reading *Funny Bones*, the children delighted in correcting the class teacher's fun misnaming of the bones of the skeleton. Because the children are given lots of encouragement, they try hard and are already becoming happy and enthusiastic learners.
- In Years 1 to 6, all groups of pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Mindful of the imbalance in numbers between boys and girls, staff ensure that the preferred learning styles of both genders are planned for. In consequence, both achieve well.
- Standards in reading are particularly strong and, at the end of Year 2, attainment is above average and is sometimes exceptionally high.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment is consistently above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Strong achievement in reading is secured because reading is taught well throughout the school. It is aided by a well-founded structured programme of the teaching of letters and sounds. The youngest pupils in Year 1 are taught systematically about the sounds that letters make and their phonic knowledge is put to good use in decoding text. All pupils, including the least able, enjoy using these skills to build words that they find tricky.
- Most pupils read confidently and with skill. By the time that they reach Year 6, pupils have a strong appreciation of text and they talk confidently about similarities and differences in authors' approach. For example, Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about differences in Enid Blyton's approach to adventure and that of JK Rowling.
- Although above average, standards in writing are not as high as in reading or mathematics. This is largely because fewer pupils reach the higher levels in writing.
- Recent work shows that pupils learn the mechanics of how to write for a range of purposes and in different styles well, but there are too few opportunities for them to write at length and depth. This is because, across the school, teachers' planning does not provide for writing as part of work in other subjects, particularly in topic work.
- Although standards in mathematics at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are above average, pupils' practical and investigational skills are not so well developed as their well-honed calculation skills. The school is keenly aware of this. Even though a revision of the mathematics curriculum means that more opportunities are being provided for practical activities, the impact of these is not yet fully secure.
- The very few pupils that are in receipt of pupil premium funding achieve well in both English and mathematics. Their progress is tracked carefully and reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that their progress matches that of other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make rapid progress. Their individual needs are identified early and staff ensure that clear and exceptionally well-considered individual programmes of support are provided. Skilled teaching assistants play an important role in these pupils' rapid progress towards their targets.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff have warm working relationships with the pupils. Praise is used well to boost their self-esteem, enabling pupils of all abilities to grow in confidence.
- In all classes, pupils' social skills are supported well because teachers ensure that there are opportunities for individual, paired and small-group work. Pupils say that they enjoy working together to solve problems. This was evident in a good-quality lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils when they enjoyed sorting out a range of printed material to identify what fonts were appropriate for different types of writing. Working in groups, they developed a range of

plausible reasons for the selection of particular fonts in, for example, newspapers and greetings cards. Here, the teaching was successful because work was challenging, enjoyable and, most of all, a clear purpose was provided for the lesson.

- Teaching is most successful when staff ensure that work is planned to meet the differing ages and abilities present in each class. Years 5 and 6 pupils, for example, made good progress in their learning in a mathematics lesson in which the teacher provided a good range of challenging work aimed at securing the pupils' understanding of place value to 0.001.
- Although activities are usually planned to meet the needs of all groups, this is not always the case. In particular, teachers do not always provide sufficiently challenging activities for the more able pupils in writing.
- Teachers are adept at ensuring that the learning strategies employed are adapted well to meet the preferred learning styles of pupils. For example, because there is a large predominance of boys in each class, teachers ensure that the texts chosen in English reflect the boys' interests.
- Staff question pupils well to assess their understanding of lesson objectives. Marking is generally good. Even so, pupils are not clear about what they need to do to improve their work and to attain the next step in their learning.
- The teaching of reading successfully develops pupils' reading skills. This is aided and supported by effective procedures for parents and carers to support their children's reading at home.
- Teaching successfully promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through well-considered topics, celebrations of their own culture and finding out about other societies such as 'Bollywood Dancing' and visits such as to the Gurdwara in Reading.
- The school's evaluation that teaching is of good quality is confirmed by inspection findings. Teaching is not yet outstanding because even though all the lessons seen were good and leading to good achievement, none was of outstanding quality.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

is good

- Behaviour is consistently good around the school. A noticeable feature is how well relationships are fostered by all the adults. This results in pupils thoroughly enjoying school and learning and feeling a part of the community. They are caring, polite and enthusiastic. Levels of attendance are high.
- Parents and carers are unanimous in saying that their children are safe at school. Pupils themselves say that they feel safe. Because there is an effective personal and social programme, pupils' skills are developed well. Pupils recognise, for example, the need to be aware of others, such as when playing games on the playground. Discussions with pupils show that they recognise the importance of e-safety and older pupils have an understanding of some of the issues related to cyber bullying.
- The staff are assiduous at ensuring that all groups of pupils are included in the full range of activities provided by the school. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school and in assemblies is usually outstanding. However, pupils' learning behaviours, although generally good, are inconsistent because pupils need to be reminded to concentrate and remain on task.

The leadership and management

is good

- The headteacher's leadership and management are effective. She helps to focus the school's vision for improvement by transmitting clear expectations of achievement and behaviour. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher and the staff.
- Staff morale is high because contributions and suggestions are valued. This leads to a positive team spirit.
- Previous weaknesses in the frequency and rigour of the monitoring of teaching and learning have been removed. In consequence, self-evaluation procedures are accurate and thorough and give rise to a good-quality development plan.
- Rigorous performance management procedures, when linked to the ensuing effective programme of professional development, ensure that there is a high level of consistency in the

approach to learning in all classes.

- Following a thorough review, a more creative curriculum has been developed since the previous inspection. The increasing focus on strengthening links between subjects is starting to have a positive impact. Even though teachers now plan for more opportunities for pupils to write in many subjects, senior staff are keenly aware of the need to extend these even further.
- Adults promote equality well because each pupil's needs are carefully considered and there are regular meetings to discuss the progress of pupils. This ensures that, apart from higher attaining pupils in writing, all groups make good progress and achieve well.
- The local authority supports the school well. Regular monitoring meetings are supplemented by the school's purchase of additional support. This included a very helpful review of teaching and learning carried out in November 2011.
- Careful attention is paid to the distribution of additional resources including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and also the limited amount of pupil premium funding provided. Deployment, both of staff and learning resources, is effective.
- The quality of leadership and management is not yet outstanding because its impact on pupils' achievement and the quality of provision, although improving, is not yet outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is good. The governing body is involved fully in the strategic development of the school
 - regular monitoring visits enable the members of the governing body to secure an accurate view of the school's strengths and development points
 - the governing body is well organised and is committed to ensuring that the school continues its path of improvement
 - the governing body is careful to ensure regulatory requirements are met. These include those relating to child protection, health and safety and staff vetting procedures
 - the governing body has carried out a thorough audit of its skills. It rightly recognises that the next step, in order to become outstanding, is to ensure that all governors, particularly those new to the post, are thoroughly trained.

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	110021
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	403105

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Telford
Headteacher	Beverley Williams
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2007
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