

Curzon Church of England Combined School

School Lane, Penn Street Village, Amersham, HP7 0QL

Inspection dates 18–19 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 across all subjects and reach above average attainment in both English and mathematics. Attainment for more able pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 is a particular strength in the school.
- Pupils who require additional support, are disabled or have special educational needs receive one-to-one teaching or other targeted support, which successfully helps them to achieve as well as their peers.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and some teaching is outstanding. Teachers deliver lessons that are interesting and enjoyable, which promote pupils' very positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel safe and say that staff care for them well. Behaviour is good and pupils are kind, courteous and well mannered.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. As a result the school has continued to improve since its previous inspection and has the expertise needed to ensure that the quality of teaching will continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement by the end of Key Stage 1 is not as strong as it is in Key Stage 2, where it is good and often outstanding.
- Systems to analyse the progress of pupils are not fully effective in identifying where pupils' progress could be accelerated.
- The school's targets for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 are not as high as those expected for the Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Not all teachers and teaching assistants are competent in the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) yet.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons taught by six teachers and visited a number of other lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, representatives from the governing body and from the local authority.
- Meetings were also held with groups of pupils and the inspector also listened to pupils read.
- The inspector took account of the 51 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information and teachers' records and planning.
- Minutes of meetings, reports written for the governing body and monitoring undertaken by the governing body were also reviewed.

Inspection team

Angela Kirk, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This smaller-than-average-sized primary school serves a village community and its surrounding areas.
- Most pupils are White British, with a few pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action and supported at school action plus is similar to average. There are currently no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than 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?

- Raise expectations and improve progress so that, by the end of Key Stage 1, achievement improves further in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - setting pupils higher targets for the end of each year
 - supporting staff through coaching, to accelerate pupils' progress, especially in the teaching of phonics.
- Enhance the analysis of tracking information on groups of pupils so that all teachers and governors can use this to extend their knowledge of achievement and tackle any areas which are inhibiting outstanding progress throughout the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From starting points that are similar to those expected for their age, pupils make good progress. The best progress is made in Key Stage 2. Progress for Early Years Foundation Stage children (who are taught alongside some Year 1 pupils), and in Key Stage 1, is at least in line with that expected nationally, but it is not as strong as that further up the school.
- Pupils read widely and often. All those who discussed reading with the inspector either in meetings, lessons or individually clearly enjoy reading and can talk about their favourite authors and about the feelings of different characters from the books they study. However, for some younger pupils, their phonic knowledge has not developed rapidly. The school has identified and started to act on this concern and reorganised the method it uses to teach phonics. Staff have received further training.
- Pupils achieve well across the curriculum because teachers ensure that a wide range of skills, including those needed for good communication, are taught well. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 geography lesson, having previously taken notes from video material about how mountains and volcanoes were formed, pupils produced high-quality presentations, illustrated by practical demonstrations, to explain this information in their own words.
- Groups of pupils, including those supported with additional funds and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, make similar progress to their peers. Pupils receive tailored support both in class and often through a system of one-to-one support taught in addition to their usual lessons.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning is good, with pupils' spiritual and cultural development being a strength. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply about their learning resulting in spontaneous questions such as, 'What would the world be like if there weren't any (tectonic) plates?' Since the previous inspection, the school has improved pupils' opportunities for understanding about different cultures by making meaningful links with a multicultural school in Middlesex and a school in Africa. Pupils have had first-hand opportunities to learn about Gypsy Traveller and Asian cultures.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make sure that pupils' achievements in lessons are evaluated and make any necessary adaptations to future lessons. They challenge pupils at just the right level to ensure that progress is good and engage pupils well using enjoyable activities. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 in art were creating a setting based on the work of the artist, Jo Brooker. Pupils spoke animatedly about how they had made a (three-dimensional) textured scene of sand and sea using a range of materials as a background for their clay model.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, skills are taught systematically and adults are careful to plan lessons that reflect how young children enjoy learning. For example, children in the early stages of learning to order numbers enjoyed playing a game where they had to hide in different parts of the outdoor learning area, while one child hid a number from the number line. On their return children had to identify which number was missing. Further challenge was provided through the teacher's careful questioning to check children's understanding. Care is taken to assess each pupil across the whole early years curriculum.
- Pupils find the next steps feedback particularly useful when their teacher marks their work as they say it helps them to know what to focus on next. Self-assessment techniques are used effectively. For example, in an upper Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson on measurement, pupils could evaluate which targets they had achieved through a series of animated questions prepared by the teacher using the interactive whiteboard.
- Interventions and additional support for pupils who are disabled or have special educational

needs are taught well by teachers and teaching assistants. Work is adapted carefully to ensure just the right amount of challenge, and guidance is given to enable pupils to work answers out for themselves.

- Occasionally, pupils are too passive during the main teaching session of the lesson, and for some younger pupils explanations are not sufficiently clear to enable them to fully understand new concepts and ideas. Teachers receive regular coaching to support continuously their development and to help them to introduce new ideas and techniques into their teaching. Some teachers and teaching assistants are in the early stages of teaching phonics.
- Targets set for pupils for the end of Year 2 are not always sufficiently high to ensure that the majority make better than expected progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and low-level disruption in lessons or unacceptable behaviour in the playground or around school is rare. Staff manage the behaviour and safety of pupils well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle in quickly to school through a system of clear routines and additional support from staff and parent volunteers. They start to learn to cooperate with their new peers, for example by passing around the fruit bowl, learning when to take turns and by playing simple games together.
- Parents and carers agree that behaviour is good in the school and pupils say that bullying rarely occurs. Most incidents drawn to the attention of staff relate to 'falling out' between pupils who are usually friends. Pupils are confident that all incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with well by staff. They feel that other pupils are kind and friendly and staff listen to their concerns.
- Pupils display good manners. They are taught how to keep themselves safe; for example at the beginning of each year, before their first lesson using information and communication technology, they review the rules for safe use of the internet.
- Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the governing body communicate their vision and high ambition for the school consistently well. Teachers with leadership roles and those responsible for managing areas of the curriculum undertake effective monitoring and contribute key information to the school's accurate self-evaluation.
- Appropriately focused training for staff has been undertaken and the school's use of coaching for teachers has resulted in a continuous improvement of teaching and learning. Ineffective performance from teachers in the past has been largely addressed and teachers know what is expected of them across all areas of their teaching and professional conduct, including the planning of lessons, the marking of work, the management of behaviour and safety and the assessment of pupils' achievements. Nevertheless, expectations of achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and up until the end of Year 2 are still not as high as in Key Stage 2.
- Leaders and managers have sought the views of parents and carers and gained pertinent feedback from them. They have acted to improve any issues raised. The engagement of parents and carers in their child's learning has been improved, for example through the joint home/school 'learning stories' used in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Workshops have enabled parents and carers to have a better understanding of key teaching methods used currently in the school.
- Safeguarding requirements are met and form part of the governing body's regular monitoring. Leaders and managers take very effective steps to ensure that they promote equality and, as a result, groups of pupils make good progress in the school. Discrimination

is effectively tackled. Consequently, the school is a very harmonious community.

- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
 - The school undertakes a system of data tracking to ensure that the performance of each individual pupil is tracked carefully. Work has started to use this information more strategically to provide staff and the governing body with even better information about the comparative performance of groups of pupils, but this is only in its infancy.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - has a clear overview of the school so it can provide appropriate levels of challenge and support
 - undertakes effective first-hand monitoring to support its knowledge of the school from reports and presentations
 - ensures that the financial resources are managed well and expenditure is linked to school improvement.
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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	110429
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	403119

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	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Reid
Headteacher	Jacque Coles
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2008
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