

Whiteknights Primary School

Fairlawn Green, Shinfield Rise, Reading, RG2 8EP

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although much of the teaching in Years 1 to 6 is effective, it is not consistently good.
- In some lessons, pupils find work too easy or too difficult. In others, long introductions mean that pupils have insufficient time to work independently.
- Pupils increasingly assess their own work, but are sometimes unclear about how this can help them to identify what they need to do to improve.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is broadly as expected, but older pupils sometimes lack confidence in tackling mathematical problems because they are not able to instantly recall basic number facts.
- Pupils' work in mathematics is not routinely supported by practical activities that reinforce their knowledge and deepen their understanding.
- Lessons where classes are split according to pupils' abilities in mathematics do not always take enough account of their individual levels of attainment in the work they are set.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs often work so closely with an adult that they have too few opportunities to see how they can cope on their own.

The school has the following strengths

- Strong and effective leadership is improving the quality of teaching and its impact on accelerating pupils' achievement.
- Good teaching in Reception classes results in children achieving above the level expected for their age.
- The teaching of literacy is good. Pupils are making good progress in reading and writing, particularly those learning English as an additional language.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning.
- A rich curriculum successfully promotes pupils' personal development.
- Governors keep a sharp eye on the school's performance. Their insights, gained through well-established and systematic self-review, provide a secure basis for strategic planning.
- The new headteacher has the confidence of parents, staff and pupils. He has already made a positive impact, reinforcing a strong sense of purpose across the school.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice and took place over two days.
- 22 lessons taught by 16 teachers were observed, together with sessions taken by teaching assistants working with individuals or small groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read discussed their reading habits and looked at their home/school logs.
- Discussions were held with pupils, teaching staff, school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at self-evaluation and planning documents, assessment records, displays and samples of pupils’ work and safeguarding procedures.
- They took account of the the views of 27 parents expressed through Parent View and the 20 questionnaires completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Gill Bosschaert	Additional inspector
Philip Littlejohn	Additional inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average in size, with two classes per year group.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and supported through the pupil premium is below average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is almost twice the national average and an above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, at school action plus, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The school meets the floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.
- The school has been accredited with the Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark.
- At the time of the inspection, a new headteacher had been in post since the beginning of the school year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 so that it is at least good by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information to plan work that has an appropriate level of challenge for all groups
 - always providing appropriate opportunities for pupils to work independently
 - increasing the support for pupils in using self-assessment to identify for themselves the next steps in their learning.
- Raise standards of attainment in mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
 - raising pupils' ability to instantly recall basic number facts
 - refining the setting within year groups to provide further opportunities for pupils of different abilities to work at an appropriately demanding level
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and extend their skills in numeracy through practical investigations.
- Promote the independence of pupils receiving extra support because they are disabled or have special educational needs by providing more opportunities for them to work on their own without immediately relying on the help of an adult.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- When they start school, children's skills, knowledge and abilities are below those expected for their age. Children soon settle in, as adults nurture their positive attitudes to learning. The achievement of children in the Reception classes is improving and most now exceed the levels expected for their age by the end of the year. Children entering Year 1 this year began with good social skills and a secure grounding in reading, writing and number.
- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 have been a little below average in recent years, but pupils are now making better progress. Pupils taking the phonics (the sounds letters make) test in Year 1, achieved scores in line with the national average. More pupils are now reaching the highest level in reading and writing by the end of the key stage than previously.
- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Previously, pupils in Years 3 to 6 were not making the expected progress in English and mathematics, and girls generally achieved better than boys. Better teaching has led to accelerated progress, particularly in English, and the previous gender gap has narrowed considerably. Boys and girls in Year 4, for example, are equally adept in spotting alliteration in their reading and using this to add interest in their own writing.
- In mathematics, overall progress is improving but is sometimes held back because pupils tend to lack skills in mental mathematics. For example, pupils in a lesson in Year 5 struggled to use a new method of long multiplication as they did not have number facts, such as 6×8 or 7×9 , at their fingertips. Some Year 6 pupils in the lower set did not immediately see that knowing $7+3 = 10$ could help them calculate $70+30$ quickly.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language typically outperform their peers. Similarly, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well compared to the national picture. Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs have tended not to do as well as those receiving similar levels of support in other schools. Due to improvements in the provision for them, they are now making steady progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teachers establish good relationships with pupils. Lessons are orderly and calm; pupils behave well and usually try hard. In the most effective lessons, teachers strike a good balance between introductions and the time for pupils to work on their own, with a partner, or in small groups, but this is not yet consistent practice.
- Good teaching in Reception classes is leading to good learning. For example, after a brief session as a whole class counting and singing number rhymes, children had plenty of opportunities to reinforce their understanding and extended their number skills through a wide range of practical activities.
- Very occasionally in lessons in Years 1 to 6, introductions are sometimes too long and the subsequent tasks mostly involve completing worksheets. Opportunities are missed, especially in mathematics, for pupils to reinforce their understanding and refine their skills through practical tasks.
- When teachers use assessment information to plan work that is pitched at the right level of challenge for different abilities, the learning of all groups moves forward apace. This was evident during a Year 6 lesson where pupils were identifying the characteristics of autobiographies. Offering a choice from examples requiring different levels of reading and comprehension, the teacher ensured all pupils were motivated, worked at an appropriate level of challenge and made good progress.
- In Years 3 to 6, classes are split into two ability sets for mathematics. By and large this works well, but sometimes the work within both the upper and lower sets does not fully take into account pupils' individual starting points. This means some pupils struggle to cope while others mark time by covering old ground.

- The level of work expected in each year group is displayed in child-friendly language in classrooms and around the school, and pupils increasingly refer to them to assess their own work. The school is, rightly, encouraging pupils to use these prompts and identify for themselves the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers and the skilled support staff work hard to provide extra help for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Frequently, teaching assistants assigned to support individual pupils work continuously alongside them to ensure they sustain attention and complete tasks. This approach sometimes hinders opportunities for these pupils to develop the confidence to tackle work without immediate help.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and a calm and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school. They are polite and courteous to staff and visitors, and are proud ambassadors of their school. In lessons, pupils are very willing to participate and respond particularly well when they are engaged in practical tasks.
- Parents, staff and governors express confidence in the school's management of behaviour. Behaviour logs show that most incidents are minor transgressions and that staff contact parents on the rare occasions when there is a more serious breach of the agreed behaviour policy. Pupils said that everyone gets along and that they value learning alongside children from a wide range of cultural backgrounds.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after, and their parents agree. Through lessons and assemblies, they gain a good understanding of how bullying might take different forms, although a group chosen at random said they could not recall bullying of any kind. Pupils are well versed in internet safety and are aware of the potential risks in entering personal data onto websites or exchanging it with strangers.
- Previous persistent absenteeism by a few pupils has been eradicated. This is due to the success of senior leaders and the school's family support officer in helping parents to ensure their children attend regularly.

The leadership and management are good

- Good strategic planning and the determined drive to improve the quality of teaching are leading to pupils' better achievement. Although there remains room for improvement, teaching is more effective than at the time of the previous inspection and is having a positive impact on improving the outcomes for all pupils.
- The effective management of teaching performance, together with well-targeted professional development, is making a significant improvement to the quality of teaching and learning in the school.
- The monitoring of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning are a strength; all staff feel valued and supported. The school has benefited from advice and guidance from the local authority, for example, in enhancing the provision in the Reception classes.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. Anomalies in the achievement of different groups, such as the previous dip in the progress of pupils receiving additional support, are quickly spotted and addressed. This illustrates the school's determination to provide equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through assemblies, focused lessons, and their participation in a good range of visits and a variety of clubs. The diversity of pupils' backgrounds is acclaimed through special events such as international days and the celebration of religious festivals. Such activities contribute well to pupils' understanding of modern democratic Britain and to their global awareness.
- Good opportunities enable pupils to practise and extend their literacy skills across the curriculum. The mathematics subject leader has recently drawn up guidelines for colleagues on how to promote pupils' agility in mental calculations. A start has been made on implementing these ideas, but they are not yet fully embedded.
- The school successfully fosters strong partnerships with parents. This is evident in the

homework diaries that include entries by pupils, parents and staff, not only about homework but also messages between home and school, together with useful guidelines for parents about supporting their children's learning at home. One boy remarked, 'It's very handy, because everything is in one place.'

■ **The governance of the school:**

- has been instrumental in keeping the school forward looking during a period of change
- is effectively involved in self-evaluation and keeps a sharp eye on assessment information about the school's performance
- ensures the efficient management of financial resources, including making sure that the funds received through the pupil premium are allocated and used effectively and help raise pupils' achievement
- ensures that safeguarding arrangements are well established and effective.

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	109839
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	405256

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	382
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bayes
Headteacher	Francois Walker
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 January 2011
Telephone number	0118 9872588
Fax number	0118 9758497
Email address	admin@whiteknights.wokingham.sch.uk

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