

Ewelme CE (VA) Primary School

Burrows Hill, Ewelme, Wallingford, OX10 6HU

Inspection dates 27–28 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 and their attainment is consistently above average by the end of Year 6. Reading skills are especially strong.
- Teachers have good expectations most of the time and they provide good challenge in lessons. Skilled teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils feel safe and thoroughly enjoy school. They are polite, sociable and articulate, and they behave well.
- The lively and engaging curriculum makes learning exciting and motivates pupils well in most respects.
- The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and continues to improve quickly. Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, ensure that there is no complacency. There has been good improvement in pupils' performance and leaders have a good track record for developing teaching.
- Leaders monitor provision thoroughly and have a good understanding of where improvement is still needed. Consequently, the school is well placed to iron out the few remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in the curriculum.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While progress in writing is good overall, it is more uneven than in reading and mathematics. This is because pupils have insufficient opportunities to write in different subjects and handwriting is not taught systematically.
- Although the vast majority of teaching is good, work in Year 1 is not always adapted well enough to take account of pupils' different starting points, especially in phonics (letters and sounds) lessons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with members of the governing body, with members of staff and with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 31 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector also talked to parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own assessment data, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector analysed six questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This smaller-than-average-sized primary school is located in a 15th century Grade 1 listed building.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- An above average number of pupils join or leave the school during each year as about a quarter come from Service families on the nearby RAF base.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support from pupil premium funding is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Two out of four classes have new teachers in this academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that progress in writing is as consistently good as it is in reading and mathematics by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills by using them in different subjects
 - teaching handwriting systematically across the school.
- Iron out the few remaining inconsistencies in teaching by ensuring that teaching in Year 1 always takes enough account of the needs of different pupils so that work is pitched at the right level for all, especially in phonics lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school in the Reception Year, most are working at the expected levels for their age. From these starting points, pupils' achievement is good. Their above average attainment by the end of Year 6 ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Across the school, pupils develop good communication and literacy skills. They read widely, developing a love of books and a thirst for knowledge. Pupils are articulate and speak with confidence to adults and each other or when presenting work in assemblies.
- Writing skills also improve well over time, but progress is not consistently good across the school. Writing is not always used well enough to support learning in different subjects and not all pupils use a neat handwriting style.
- Pupils quickly improve their skills, knowledge and understanding in mathematics. Older pupils think like mathematicians, showing good ability in lessons as they identify complex number patterns. They explain clearly the strategies they use to solve problems and have a good instant recall of 'number facts'.
- In the Reception Year, children settle quickly and the early focus on supporting their personal, social and emotional development is highly effective. In lessons, children show good independence when, for example, looking for dinosaurs in sand or role-playing in 'The Veterinary Surgery'.
- Leaders monitor carefully the progress of different groups, including those who are eligible for pupil premium funding. Consequently, there are no significant differences between the progress that is made by different groups, including pupils joining the school other than at the start of Reception, and all groups make good progress over time. However, on occasion, Year 1 pupils make slower progress because activities are not fully and consistently matched to their individual needs.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do as well as their classmates in lessons and over time. Work is carefully matched to their needs. The school has an impressive record for ensuring that nearly all pupils reach at least the nationally expected Level 4 by the end of Year 6.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching of literacy and numeracy is nearly all good. There is a good structure to the teaching of reading and skills are practised regularly so that they are securely reinforced. Pupils enjoy writing but there are too few opportunities in the curriculum for them to write in different subjects and handwriting is not taught systematically.
- Teachers typically have good expectations of what pupils should achieve in numeracy lessons. For example, in a lesson for Years 3 and 4, pupils were challenged to think about the different types of number pairs. This helped them to improve their skills quickly and there was good challenge for the most able as they were encouraged to explain the strategies they were using.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well. Skilled teaching assistants provide good support in lessons, and small group activities at other times focus on the right priorities in literacy and numeracy, and support learning well.
- Teachers get on well with pupils and manage their behaviour effectively. The good use of resources such as interactive whiteboards helps to bring subjects alive and pupils are expected to think for themselves. For example, in a Year 2 geography lesson, pupils investigated life in Germany before writing a presentation for the harvest assembly.
- There are a small number of occasions when teaching requires improvement. This is most evident in Year 1, when work is not adapted well enough to the needs of all pupils and, especially in phonics lessons, commercial schemes are followed too rigorously. When this

happens, pupils' progress slows.

- In contrast, in most lessons, teachers make good use of assessment to identify what to teach next. Pupils are clear about how to improve their work. The quality of marking in literacy books in Years 5 and 6 is exemplary, clearly identifying next steps and giving pupils time to respond to comments before they start their next piece of work.
- Good teaching of Reception Year children ensures that they acquire new skills quickly. Adults give children sensitive support that helps them to settle quickly at the start of the school year. Teaching makes good use of the well-resourced outdoor area and provides a good early focus on language development including improving both speaking and reading skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and take great care of their unique medieval school building. Pupils make comments such as, 'everyone is kind,' and, 'We try to be good so that we can learn quickly.' Inspection findings confirm their view that behaviour is typically good and most parents, carers and staff share this view.
- In lessons, pupils are keen and they willingly share their ideas, although just occasionally they do not listen well enough to each other. In Years 5 and 6, pupils like the way that good listening is encouraged through an awards system. They feel that this works well.
- Pupils feel safe. They have a good awareness of different types of bullying. The school has thorough systems for tackling bullying and pupils are confident that, on the rare occasions when it does occur, it is tackled quickly. Activities such as the Junior Citizenship scheme, and Young Leaders training, ensure that pupils have a good awareness of the dangers they may face in later life.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children quickly develop good levels of independence and confidence. They sensibly select where they are going to work and support each other well.
- The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that there is no discrimination. Newly arrived pupils settle very quickly because everyone in the school is so welcoming. As one pupil said, 'We help each other and quickly make friends with new children.'
- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' good enjoyment of school. The school works closely with outside agencies to support the very small number of pupils who do not attend school regularly.
- Pupils take responsibility well. The school council gives pupils a good voice and 'House Captains' are clear about their roles. Pupils talk enthusiastically about school, showing great maturity when they discuss what they enjoy and the very minor things that they would like to see improved.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels are strongly focused on building on the school's strengths and tackling the remaining minor areas for improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and this means that development planning focuses on the right priorities. Performance data are used sharply to check pupils' progress and to respond quickly to any dips in achievement.
- Key development points from the previous inspection have been tackled well and the school continues to move forward quickly. The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- The school has a good track record for improving teaching and for supporting staff that are new to the school. Performance management provides good challenge and is linked well to opportunities for additional training. Such training has improved the accuracy of assessments and this has had a positive effect on pupils' achievement throughout the school. Training on teaching phonics has also had a positive impact on achievement but has

not been as successful across all year groups, with some remaining weaknesses evident, especially in Year 1.

- The partnership between Ewelme and other schools is very effective. Members of staff have numerous opportunities to share good practice with other local schools and this has helped to raise pupils' achievement by making teachers more reflective about how they can develop their own skills. A partnership with a school in Uganda makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural awareness.
 - Although there are limited opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in different subjects, the curriculum is mostly well planned and lively and engaging. Together with the school's strong links with the village church, the curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development especially well. Pupils learn a different 'value' such as 'trust' each month, happily participate in assemblies and show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for local homeless charities.
 - Safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet requirements. Members of staff and pupils are well trained in ensuring safety on a complex school site.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - the governing body provides good challenge and is well involved in planning for the long-term development of the school
 - there is a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses based on thorough monitoring of its work
 - the governing body works well with the headteacher to ensure that pupil premium funding is used to good effect, for example, employing additional staff to provide social and emotional support when it is needed.
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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	123197
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	403518

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	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Fenn
Headteacher	Margery Slatter
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
Telephone number	01491 839240
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