

Frieth Church of England Combined School

Frieth, Henley on Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 6PR

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Children get off to a good start in the lively and welcoming Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Throughout the rest of the school, pupils, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, achieve well in English and mathematics to reach above average standards by the time they leave.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is typically energetic and engaging across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. They feel well cared for and extremely safe, a view shared by their parents.
- Teaching and achievement have improved considerably since the previous inspection as a result of the drive and determination of the headteacher, supported by an enthusiastic and committed staff team and governing body.
- The school's caring atmosphere promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development extremely well. As a result, the school is an extremely harmonious community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, activities in different parts of lessons are too easy for some pupils, especially the more able.
- Pupils' targets do not consistently show them how to improve their work, especially in mathematics.
- In a few lessons, introductions are too long, not allowing enough time for pupils to get on with individual or group work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, or parts of lessons, taught by seven teachers, several of them jointly with the headteacher. He listened to pupils reading and looked at samples of their work from the current and previous year. He observed them around the school and in an assembly.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. He also spoke to a group of pupils about their experiences of the school.
- A range of school documentation was examined, including records of pupils' progress and attainment, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information related to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector considered the views of 11 members of staff expressed in questionnaires
- Account was also taken of the responses made by 51 parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Graham Lee, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Frieth is a smaller than average-sized primary school, serving a village community. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision for Reception-aged children in a class with Year 1 pupils.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with none at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is a little below average, as is the small proportion supported through school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils who are currently eligible for pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is considerably below average.
- In 2011, the school met the government floor standard which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teaching challenges all groups of pupils consistently in all parts of lessons, especially the more able
 - making introductions to lessons sharply focused, allowing sufficient time for group and independent work
 - ensuring that approaches to target setting are effective throughout the school in helping pupils to improve, especially in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the school with skills and understanding that vary from year to year but are usually as expected of four-year-olds and often better. They make good progress in their Reception Year because a welcoming and stimulating learning environment enables them to settle quickly and to become confident and eager learners.
- As they move up through the school, pupils build on this good start and make good progress overall. They concentrate well and work hard in lessons and enjoy their learning. They are often thoughtful and articulate in explaining their reasoning and ideas.
- Pupils often make the best progress in reading because good teaching of letters and the sounds they represent (phonics) provides a solid foundation for further learning. In addition, pupils are enthusiastic readers; they read widely for enjoyment and to support their learning in other subjects.
- This strong foundation is contributing to marked improvements in writing. Pupils develop their skills well and often write with flair and imagination. They particularly enjoy the interesting opportunities to write in their topic work. For example, pupils in Year 6 created some vivid imagery when considering the picture on a Chinese plate as part of their topic on 'Around the World'.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is much improved since the previous inspection. As they move up through the school, pupils develop a range of strategies to deal with increasingly complex calculations and apply these to solving problems. They are becoming adept at explaining their strategies and at using mathematical language.
- In recent years, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 had shown a declining trend but this was reversed emphatically in 2012. All pupils reached the expected levels in English and mathematics (Level 4) and many reached the higher Level 5. Pupils in the current Year 6 are working at similarly high levels.
- The few pupils with disabilities and special educational needs also make good progress, including some with quite complex needs. The school is enabling these pupils to catch up with others in their year group, as seen in the Year 6 test results in 2012.
- There are no differences in the achievement of girls and boys overall. Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are doing well. Occasionally, the progress of more able pupils slows when tasks are relatively undemanding or they are asked to sit for too long when they are ready to get on with their work.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and its impact over time is good. There are examples of outstanding practice in the school.
- Provision in the mixed Early Years Foundation Stage/Year 1 class is handled skilfully by the staff team to ensure that each group receives appropriate levels of support for their learning. For the Reception children, a good balance between learning led by adults and activities that they choose for themselves is enabling them to make good progress in all areas of their learning. The well-equipped outside area has been developed considerably, although the space is not yet used to its full potential to support children's learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and manage their classes well. They plan interesting activities which meet the needs of most pupils of all abilities and are very successful at engaging them in learning. Teachers are generally very adept at asking questions that consolidate pupils' learning and probe their understanding. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher asked searching open-ended questions to deepen pupils' understanding of three-dimensional shapes, insisting on the use of precise mathematical language.

- The pace of learning in lessons has improved since the previous inspection and pupils have many opportunities to discuss their ideas and take part in practical work in pairs and groups. There are still occasions, however, when introductions are overlong, allowing insufficient time for independent and group work.
- Teachers are using information from assessments much more effectively to plan work that meets the needs of their pupils and to make adjustments as lessons develop. There are many examples of marking that helps pupils to improve. A very strong feature of the learning is the way pupils assess their own and each other's work, which pupils say really helps them to see how to improve. Older pupils are very clear about their targets in literacy but the use of academic targets is variable and it is much stronger in literacy than numeracy.
- Reading is taught well throughout the school and reinforced through a strong phonics programme and an environment rich in literature. The curriculum is planned in a way that helps pupils to see how the different aspects of their learning fit together. In particular, it is providing more opportunities for pupils to write purposefully in real contexts.
- The teaching of mathematics is much improved since the previous inspection. Teachers use innovative strategies to teach calculation and provide many opportunities for pupils to be involved in practical work and to apply their mathematical skills. Occasionally, teaching does not fully challenge all groups of learners, especially the more able.
- Pupils who are disabled and have special educational needs are taught well through an effective mix of support in class and one-to-one support where appropriate. Teaching assistants often make an important contribution to the learning of these pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- From the time they arrive in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the school's expectations of how children will behave and treat one another are consistently reinforced. Children respond extremely well and, as a result, quickly settle into the school routines, clearing up after themselves, for example, with very little prompting.
- In most lessons, pupils display exemplary attitudes to learning. They are very keen to learn and cooperate and they collaborate extremely well. Pupils confirm that this is typically the case and say that any minor disruption to learning is rare.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take their responsibilities, on the school council and as house captains, for example, very seriously. They talk with great enthusiasm about all that school has to offer.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is extremely good. During the inspection, the inspector saw no examples of unpleasant or aggressive behaviour. This is borne out by behaviour logs which show that even minor incidents are few and far between. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
- Pupils get on very well together and treat each other and adults with great respect. They say that any form of bullying is very rare and, if it does occur, is dealt with promptly and effectively by members of staff. As a result, all feel extremely safe in school. This is confirmed by their parents.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their regular attendance, which is consistently above average. There are no pupils who are persistently absent.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership has enabled the school to make significant improvement since its previous inspection, little over a year ago. Teaching and achievement are better and the issues identified at that inspection have been largely addressed. This, together with accurate and effective self-evaluation, indicates that the school has strong capacity to continue to improve.
- The headteacher, supported by her senior team and governing body, has driven these

improvements with a clear vision for the future. The school's traditional strengths of providing excellent care and support have been maintained. Most importantly, there has been much greater rigour and determination to improve pupils' academic achievement. The headteacher has inspired the support of all staff for this project, and morale is high.

- The school's success in promoting equality of opportunity is evident in the good progress of all groups of learners. Systems for monitoring the progress of individuals and groups of pupils are now firmly established. This is enabling leaders to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils, to identify those who may be underachieving at a much earlier stage and to provide effective additional support where necessary.
- The headteacher has introduced more rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and has successfully helped teachers to improve their practice. This has led to significant improvements in teachers' confidence and skills, resulting in improved achievement for pupils, especially in mathematics. Nevertheless, there are still some variations in pupils' progress from year to year in different subjects.
- The curriculum provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their reading, writing, mathematics and communication skills in a range of situations to enhance their learning. The curriculum is particularly successful in motivating and engaging pupils and showing them how different aspects of their learning fit together. The creative arts, sport and French and German add a further dimension to pupils' experience.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through its very caring atmosphere, its strong ties with the local church and the constant reinforcement of the school's values of care and respect.
- Responses to the online survey show that the school works well with the vast majority of parents, who hold the school in high regard and would recommend it to others.
- The local authority has made a good contribution to the school's improvement, both through the support of the school improvement officer and through the 'J20' coaching programme which has helped to improve the quality of teaching.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very supportive of the school and brings a wide range of expertise to its work to enable it to fulfil its strategic role effectively. For example, governors took the important decision to fund separate literacy and numeracy lessons for each individual year group in Key Stage 2; this has enabled teachers to tailor activities even more closely to the needs of pupils at different stages of learning.
- Under the leadership of a new chair, the governing body is developing more effective ways to evaluate the effectiveness of school leaders in order to hold them to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- All statutory procedures for the safeguarding of children and the vetting of staff are fully in place and reviewed regularly.

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	110461
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	405287

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	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicola Brown
Headteacher	Lindsay Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	June 2011
Telephone number	01494 881554
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