

# Stephen Freeman Community Primary School

Freeman Road, Didcot, OX11 7BZ

**Inspection dates** 11–12 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- The headteacher provides strong and sensitive leadership, and good teamwork is supporting the school's development well.
- The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is good. Staff track pupils' attainment at regular intervals to ensure that they are making at least expected progress.
- The school provides outstanding care for its pupils and has excellent links with other professionals in education, health and social care.
- Breakfast and after-school clubs serve a real need and also foster pupils' social skills well.
- The staff make good provision for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Pupils behave well and show good levels of respect for one another and for their teachers. They are keen to do their best.
- The school forges good links with parents and carers, which are further supported by the good work of the family workers.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires further development to enable the children to make more rapid progress.
- Marking and individual pupil targets are not always effective enough to enable pupils to know how they can move forward with their learning.
- Pupils do not make the same rapid progress in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- They observed reading lessons and heard pupils read.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined.
- The school's most recent parent survey was reviewed together with the 26 responses on Parent View.
- A telephone discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, selected staff and a group of pupils.
- Progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation were reviewed.
- A discussion was held with the Chair of the Governing Body.

## Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Bailey

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with 11 classes, of which two are part-time Nursery classes. Admission numbers mean that some classes are currently of mixed age. There are three combined Reception and Year 1 classes and three combined Year 2 and Year 3 classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported through both school action and school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Seven pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Children begin the Nursery the term following their third birthday. Most transfer to the Reception class.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher provides advice to other schools on child protection matters and also on the teaching of music.
- The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to the pupil premium is above average. Nearly one third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.
- The governing body manages the linked children's centre and the breakfast and after-school clubs held in those premises. These clubs are also attended by pupils from two other schools.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of the following aspects of teaching even further to:
  - ensure that pupils gain maximum benefit from teachers' marking of their work
  - make sure that there is greater consistency in agreeing individual targets with pupils so that they are all clear about how they can improve their work
  - enable pupils to know what they need to understand and know in order to get to the next level in reading, writing and mathematics
  - ensure that all teaching assistants have a full understanding of phonics (linking letters and sounds) so that they can accurately support small groups.
- Improve the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - making the external space into a more stimulating learning area by providing activities which extend those in the classroom
  - defining more thoroughly the learning possibilities which can be obtained from the activities that are planned
  - training the teachers to deal effectively with the mixed Reception/Year 1 classes.
- Increase the rate of progress in mathematics so that it matches the good progress in reading and writing by:
  - mapping out a series of skills in mental mathematics to be taught and learned as pupils move up through the school to enable them to think accurately and more quickly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school, their attainment overall is below that expected for their age, especially in communication and language, personal and social development, and mathematical skills. The children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception Year, the children's attainment is generally still below averages.
- Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average. Significant progress has been made in improving attainment by age seven since 2009 and it has been rising consistently. These significant improvements have also been gradually moving through to Key Stage 2 where attainment has also been rising. By the end of Year 6, results are broadly average and show a marked improvement over time.
- Pupils make best progress in reading. The school's good library provision and borrowing facilities, the support for parents and carers to engage with their children in reading at home, and improved phonics teaching are the main contributory factors. Grouping pupils by ability for these activities ensures that pupils make progress appropriate for their abilities in early reading.
- While pupils have increased their rate of progress in mathematics, it has not been as rapid as in reading and writing. Pupils are not always able to calculate quickly enough in their heads. The school does not yet have a structure of key skills to support mental strategies as the pupils move up through the school.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs make similar rates of progress to other pupils based on their prior attainment. The good provision for them through individual and small group teaching and specific programmes which support their individual needs benefits them well.
- Extra funding used to provide additional support for pupils who are eligible for this, both in the classroom and through one-to-one teaching, is beginning to make a positive difference to the achievement of these pupils.
- The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View or to the school's own survey agree that the children make good progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Occasionally, outstanding teaching was observed and much was good. Teachers manage the pupils well and lessons proceed calmly with mutual respect between pupils and staff. Well-prepared activities for different abilities ensure that pupils are often challenged sufficiently.
- Teachers question pupils effectively, supporting their involvement in lessons and their speaking and listening skills. Year 4 pupils chose three favourite lines from a published poem about the wind and backed this up with reasons for their choice. Year 2/3 pupils had good opportunities to discuss friendship in a personal, social and health education lesson.
- Lessons are well balanced with an appropriate amount of discussion and written or practical activity. Teachers ensure that pupils are reminded of recent learning to support new learning, the purpose of which is shared well.
- Teaching in the Nursery is often good. Children develop their social skills effectively and these are often low on entry. Nursery children organised 'the train station' and played interesting games with dice and a jigsaw which helped them identify colours. Nursery staff work particularly hard to improve speaking skills and independence in toilet use which are often underdeveloped on entry.
- Staff are still adjusting to the mixed-age arrangements for Reception and Year 1 pupils. Teaching assistants are involved well but do not always sufficiently recognise the learning potential to be obtained from different activities. While some teaching assistants have a

good knowledge of how letters make different sounds, a minority are not always accurate when sounding them out.

- The external Early Years Foundation Stage area is used frequently with well-taken opportunities for physical development. While it is very spacious, it is not yet being used to its full potential as a learning extension to the classroom.
- Teachers' marking is up to date but does not consistently help pupils to know what to do to improve. While some individual targets are set, they are not monitored well enough and kept updated. Pupils are not sufficiently aware of how to get to the next level in their work.
- Teaching of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is good, helping their good progress. Carefully targeted work and good assistance provided by support staff in one-to-one and small group situations assist these pupils' good progress. Access to named personnel supports the confidence of pupils with statements of special educational needs.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils enjoy school and like their activities. They eagerly take part in lessons and are well motivated to work. They enjoy respectful relationships with one another and with adults. Evidence from the behaviour log and the absence of exclusions for several years indicate that pupils typically behave well. Pupils appreciate the school rewards system and eagerly look forward to the weekly award assembly.
- Pupils state that they feel safe in school. As one pupil put it, 'When somebody is in trouble, there is always a teacher to help.' They understand the importance of road safety. Following their study of the 'Gingerbread Man', Reception/Year 1 pupils followed up a 'letter of complaint' about him running into the road. With the use of a zebra crossing laid out on the floor, the children taught the 'Gingerbread Man' how he should cross the road safely.
- Pupils have a good understanding of cyber-bullying and would inform their teachers and parents and carers if they received any inappropriate messages. They acquire good life skills through the personal, social, health and education programme when they discuss important matters about growing up with a clear focus on getting on with others. This is reflected in their good behaviour around school and in their friendly and supportive relationships.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now around the national average. The school works well with the attendance service and, in particular, the family workers, so that parents and carers know the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality.
- Pupils are very concerned about others. They suggest a charity to support yearly. This year, they suggested the charity linked to the local army bomb disposal unit. The padre visited during the inspection and spoke to the children about his work. They listened with much interest.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Phase leaders provide good support for the headteacher in monitoring the school's work, in providing advice to colleagues and tracking progress across the school. The tracking system is effective in identifying rates of progress for individuals and groups of pupils.
- The headteacher works well with colleagues from a small cluster of local schools providing mutual self-support and advice. This system helps to make sure all judgements about standards reached and rates of progress are agreed and understood. This group also enables the judgements about teaching and learning to be reached and agreed successfully in each other's schools.
- The school development plan has a clear focus on achievement and has the correct priorities for further improvement. The school knows itself well and its self-evaluation is accurate.
- The school works hard with parents and carers who, in turn, are very supportive of the

school's efforts for their children. Staff have worked keenly on initiatives to help the parents and carers support their children at home. Sessions and advice to enable them to help their children with reading and mathematics games have been well received.

- Performance management and appraisal arrangements are well organised. The headteacher and senior staff check the quality of teaching thoroughly. Staff feel well supported, expressing positive views about the school. They have good opportunities to develop their skills further after lesson observations and attend relevant courses. The headteacher is beginning to be able to make well-informed decisions about teachers rising up the salary scale on the basis of these checks on the effectiveness of their teaching.
  - The local authority has been helpful in supporting the governing body to improve. Governors have appreciated the courses provided to help them understand their role and to fulfil it. They are clearer about their duties as a result and keen to develop further.
  - The curriculum is well balanced with good opportunities for music. All Year 3 pupils learn either the violin or cello and Year 2 pupils the ocarina. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport and creative activities. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through religious education, personal, social and health education, and the extra-curricular activities. The residential opportunity every two years with a focus on outdoor pursuits and teamwork makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
  - Safeguarding opportunities are secure and staff are kept up to date with child protection training. The behaviour policy works well in practice.
  - The school's extra funding for pupils who are in need of support has been well targeted to help with one-to-one tuition, small group work, and to purchase 'learning at home' packs and provide therapy sessions. Good impact is shown in rising attainment and pupils' good progress including those with special educational needs.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - It is developing well through the work of the headteacher and support from the local authority. It has suffered from changes over time but it now has a new Chair and several new members who are keen to improve the work of the governing body.
    - Governors have begun to know the school well. Their recent training courses have enabled them to understand school data better and also how to challenge the school more effectively about the quality of teaching and hold it to account for pupils' progress.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123079
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406136

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Rowan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Bennie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9–10 December 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 814718
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