

# RAF Benson Community Primary School

Mosquito Lane, RAF Benson, Wallingford, OX10 6EP

**Inspection dates** 18–19 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.

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved and is now good. Teaching has improved primarily because the headteacher has observed lessons closely and given helpful feedback to teachers.
- Other senior leaders along with the headteacher regularly check pupils' work and teachers' planning of learning to ensure teachers are consistently helping pupils to do the best they can.
- Due to consistently good teaching, all pupils, including those who join the school at different times, are making good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the standards that pupils reach for their age are rising across the school.
- The governing body holds senior leaders to account for how well the pupils are doing and works closely with leaders to decide priorities for the school's further improvement.
- Due to the good care and guidance given by staff, pupils are well behaved, eager to learn and feel safe in school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress of boys, especially those capable of reaching high standards, slows in writing in Years 3 and 4, and this means that these pupils could be doing better.
- Senior leaders do not regularly observe teaching and learning in lessons. Therefore opportunities are missed to help teachers deliver lessons where learning is outstanding.
- Some lessons are too teacher-led. As a result, there are occasions when teachers do not give pupils, especially the more able, enough tasks that allow them to learn for themselves. This means that not enough teaching is outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 17 full and part lessons and observed seven teachers. This included seven part lessons and one full lesson observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with four members of the governing body, the headteacher and other senior leaders and a group of pupils.
- Documents regarding safeguarding, school self-evaluation and improvement plans were reviewed and discussed with school leaders.
- A telephone conversation was held with a local authority representative to gain an external view of the overall effectiveness of the school.
- Pupils were heard read and samples of their work were scrutinised to investigate their progress over time.
- The views of 38 parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey on the Ofsted website were received and analysed.
- Staff questionnaires were also received and analysed.

## Inspection team

James Henry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patricia MacLachlan

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- RAF Benson Community Primary School is situated on a Royal Air Force (RAF) base and is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all the pupils are from White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The vast majority of pupils come from families where a parent or carer is a serving member of the Royal Air Force and, consequently, the number of pupils who move in and out of the school at different times is very high.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also slightly below the national average.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for which almost all pupils in this school are eligible) is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The headteacher was appointed on a permanent contract in September 2011 after undertaking the role on a temporary basis for the previous year.

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

- Increase the rate at which boys, especially the more able, make progress in writing in Years 3 and 4 by:
  - ensuring they write clearly in a variety of styles for different audiences
  - ensuring they produce more lengthy pieces of writing
  - ensuring their well-developed spoken language skills are fully used to improve the quality of their writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that more is outstanding by:
  - ensuring pupils, especially the more able, are given more demanding and open-ended tasks in lessons to allow them to explore, investigate and learn for themselves
  - ensuring marking by all teachers, especially of writing, regularly tells pupils how to move on in their learning
  - strengthening the use of teaching assistants, especially at the beginning of lessons, so that they have the opportunity to constantly support pupils' learning
  - increasing the involvement of senior leaders in observing teaching and learning in lessons so that they provide even more effective advice to teachers on how to improve and share ideas that would help teachers deliver lessons where learning is outstanding.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children who join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage have skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those typical for their ages. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with early reading, writing and mathematical skills and abilities at least in line with those expected for their age.
- All groups of pupils, including the many who join the school at different times, continue to make good progress overall across the school. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved. The improvement was reflected at the end of the school year in 2012, when all the pupils in Year 6, including those who joined the school at different times, gained at least the level expected nationally in both English and mathematics, with many achieving above-average standards.
- Progress in reading is better than that in writing. The school has a good system for teaching early reading skills. This is carefully built on with staff hearing pupils read regularly and providing reading books that are matched to pupils' ability. As a result, by the time pupils leave the school, their ability to read is often above that expected for their age.
- While progress in reading and mathematics is consistently good across all year groups, progress in writing is not as consistent, especially for more-able boys in Years 3 and 4. This is because boys are not always challenged to use their good spoken-language skills to help them put on paper longer pieces of writing and to write clearly in different styles for readers with different opinions on the particular topic.
- Most pupils are eligible for the pupil premium and they achieve well. Rising standards and pupils' consistently good progress in almost all subjects show that the school is highly effective at closing the gap between pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and all pupils nationally.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons because of consistently good teaching.
- All groups of pupils make good progress in lessons. For example in a joint mathematics lesson, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils of all abilities were given open-ended tasks to work out the number of games that would be played in a football league. Progress was good because all groups of pupils were being challenged to think logically, cooperate with others to arrive at an answer and then justify their solution to the rest of the class.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Almost all of the parents and carers who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey thought that their children were taught well. Pupils also say that they are taught well.
- The quality of teaching is good. This is mainly because teachers accurately assess the standards pupils have reached when they enter the school to plan learning in lessons that is at the right level for individuals and different groups. The information helps teachers to quickly identify and support any pupils who may be falling behind.
- Teachers also use detailed assessment information of what pupils can do to regularly check the progress of those pupils who join the school at different times (and are eligible for the pupil premium). This information tells teachers what the levels are that pupils have reached and identifies whether these pupils need extra help when they arrive so that work can be pitched at the right levels for them from starting school onwards. Consequently, these pupils make good progress and the school makes sure that all pupils have equal opportunity to do well and that no one is discriminated against.
- There are occasions when lessons are dominated by teachers with pupils sitting and listening for too long. This results in opportunities being missed for pupils, especially those who are more able, to be given more open-ended activities that allow them to investigate, explore and learn

for themselves.

- Pupils' work is marked regularly and pupils say they appreciate the comments from teachers about how to improve and move on in their learning. However, this helpful practice does not happen in all classes and across different subjects, especially in helping pupils improve their writing.
- Teachers usually use teaching assistants effectively to help pupils in lessons, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, there are times at the beginning of lessons when teaching assistants are not fully used to support pupils' learning, for example by checking and recording their responses to questions or taking a group of pupils to ensure they understand what they are expected to learn.
- Consistently good features of learning are the positive ways that teachers share with pupils what is to be learned and use questions to judge pupils' understanding. They find out in detail what pupils understand and use pupils' responses to correct any misunderstandings. This is another reason why pupils make good progress in lessons.

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

- Pupils are well behaved, respectful and polite to each other and towards the adults in school.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school mainly because there is very little bullying of any kind. They also say that staff would deal with any concerns if they arose.
- Almost all of the parents and carers who completed the Parent View survey indicated that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and that any bullying is dealt with effectively.
- There is a dedicated member of staff who runs a 'Social Circle' scheme in school. This provides emotional support for pupils when one of their parents or carers is posted overseas or when a new pupil joins the school. Consequently, the school is particularly successful at welcoming and quickly settling pupils who join the school at different times. This scheme is partly paid for by the pupil premium and shows a positive use of this funding to support the social and emotional needs of pupils as well as successfully closing any gaps between these pupils' achievement and that of other pupils.
- The school helps pupils to keep themselves safe through activities such as talks about 'stranger danger' from RAF police officers, road safety and cycling proficiency schemes. Pupils also understand the need to be safe on the internet and explain in detail the school's systems for blocking unsuitable websites.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well and pupils appreciate the school's system for rewarding good behaviour. Consequently, learning in lessons is very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils are not given enough opportunities to manage their own behaviour, for example through taking more responsibility for their own learning in lessons.
- Attendance is above the national average and there have been very few exclusions over the past two years. This is a reflection of pupils' good attitudes to school and their eagerness to learn.

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

- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders and the governing body, has brought a strong drive and a clear sense of purpose to the school. As a result, the school now has stability of leadership and this has addressed concerns raised by parents and carers at the last inspection.
- The headteacher has successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching through observing lessons and providing advice to teachers on how to improve. Consequently, teaching is now good. As a result, standards are rising across the school and all groups of pupils are making good progress, overall, in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Other senior leaders have contributed successfully to the improvement in teaching through examining teachers' planning of learning and regularly checking pupils' work. However, they do not regularly observe teaching and learning in lessons. This means that the expertise of all senior leaders in improving the quality of teaching and sharing the best practice in the school is not fully used.
- The headteacher, supported by senior leaders, manages effectively the performance of teachers partly through holding meetings to review pupils' progress where teachers are held to account for the progress of pupils in their charge. It also means that the governing body holds teachers to account for their movement on the teachers' salary scale, and governors are scrupulous in making sure any pay increase is justified on results.
- The school's understanding of what it does well and what it needs to improve is accurate. This is followed through with robust action plans to tackle weaknesses and, as already demonstrated by the improvements in teaching, shows that senior leaders, including the governing body, have the drive and ability to improve the school further.
- The range of knowledge in the subjects taught is based on topics that reflect pupils' interests. Therefore, teachers are better able to stimulate pupils' imagination, sense of enjoyment and creativity. However, there are still opportunities missed to allow more-able pupils to learn more for themselves, without close direction from the teacher.
- Learning opportunities outside the timetable help pupils to better understand spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters. For example, to develop their understanding of other cultures, pupils communicate regularly with schools in Madagascar and in Argentina as well as to United Kingdom military bases in Afghanistan, where some of their parents and carers may be posted. Also the 'Social Circle' initiative promotes pupils' moral and social development by deepening their understanding of the need to support others, especially during times of emotional stress.
- The local authority provides good support for the school when required but this has become less necessary as the school has improved.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well trained and gives good strategic direction for all major developments and priorities in the school.
  - Governors use the pupil premium to employ an extra teacher to ensure pupils are taught in smaller single-age classes and provide extra places for pupils who move to the base. They regularly call for reports from the headteacher which explain in detail how well the additional funding is used and how well pupils benefit from it to ensure all have equality of opportunity.
  - The governing body manages the performance of the headteacher and other teachers well. Governors have a good understanding of the expectations of the new national 'Teachers' Standards' if awarding teachers movement on to higher salary grades.
  - Governors visit the school on a regular basis to look at specific aspects of its work, including teaching and learning. This allows the governing body to inform itself independently of other leaders' views and advice so it can challenge as well as support senior leaders and hold them accountable for the school's performance.
  - The governing body makes sure that there is no discrimination, that all safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and that roles and responsibilities for the protection of pupils are clear and well defined. All staff are fully checked before being appointed to work in the school and receive child protection training.
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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>	123028
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402127

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mick Crake
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steph Fawdry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01491 836460
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