

# Theale C.E. Primary School

Church Street, Reading RG7 5BZ

**Inspection dates** 17–18 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school because

- Achievement in the school, including in the resource-based provision, is outstanding. Pupils achieve extremely well and are very well prepared for the next stage in their education
- All pupils, including those who are eligible for pupil premium, make excellent progress.
- Teaching is outstanding. Lessons include well-planned, relevant activities that constantly challenge pupils' thinking and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons, at breaktimes and around the school. Their overwhelmingly positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their excellent progress.
- The range of subjects and activities, in both the main school and the resource base, provides highly positive, rich opportunities for learning and contributes extremely well to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Inspirational leadership from the headteacher ensures that all leaders, managers, governors and staff share her vision of excellence. As a result, no pupil is disadvantaged or left behind.
- The school has a very thorough understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Teaching and learning are monitored exceptionally well. This demonstrates the school's excellent capacity to improve further.
- The governors provide excellent levels of challenge to the school, helping to ensure it meets all requirements.
- Leaders are aware that there is potential to simplify the use of information on pupils' progress to show achievement across key stages.

## Information about this inspection

- Eighteen lessons led by 11 teachers were observed, as well as sessions taken by teaching assistants working with individuals or small groups of pupils. Two assemblies led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher were also observed.
- Discussions were held with pupils, teaching staff, school leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation, including the school’s own records of pupils’ current progress, monitoring and evaluation documentation and records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) at the time of the inspection.

## Inspection team

Sonja Joseph, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andrew Lyons

Additional Inspector

Richard Sutton

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is average in size, with two classes in the Reception Year.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding given to schools by the government) is below average. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is well above average. These needs relate mainly to autistic spectrum disorder. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly average.
- There is specially resourced provision for up to 11 pupils with special educational needs between the ages of four and 11. This caters for pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.
- The school has a language and literacy centre on the site, which is subject to a separate inspection.

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

- Simplify the use of assessment data to show pupils' progress across key stages more clearly, in a summary form.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Almost all pupils achieve or exceed average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This has been consistent over the last three years and represents exceptional progress from starting points that are typically below age-related expectations.
- Pupils' work and recent test results illustrate that the focused action to improve reading and writing throughout the school is proving highly effective. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in English and mathematics is usually well above the national average.
- All groups of pupils, including those in the resource base and those supported by the pupil premium, make excellent progress. This is because rigorous checking of individuals' progress pinpoints gaps in learning, and teachers then ensure that all tasks and activities are carefully matched to pupils' needs. This supports their excellent learning and achievement.
- Children's attainment and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved substantially since the last inspection. They make exceptional progress, so that all children are above the expected level when they enter Key Stage 1.
- There is a strong focus on the promotion of literacy and numeracy in all lessons and activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 learnt how to use a compass to follow directions on a map using their knowledge of the book 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe'.
- Reading is taught effectively and pupils make confident use of their phonic skills, where they decode words from the letters and sounds. As a result, pupils read with confidence and good expression and have competent skills in making sense of what they are reading. They enjoy a wide range of books and their reading logs show them to be avid readers. Consequently, attainment in reading is well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- In mathematics, pupils' learning moves on rapidly because most have a very good grounding in basic number facts, including multiplication tables, and know how to apply these when tackling increasingly complex problems. Year 6 pupils, for example, were asked to work out the area of Egyptian tombs. They approached this systematically and, with skilful prompting by the teacher, they saw how their knowledge of multiplication could help solve the problem quickly. The challenge and pace in the lesson helped to motivate the pupils to achieve high levels.
- Children make outstanding progress in all subjects across the school. As well as in English, mathematics and science, they show exceptional levels of success in music, art, physical education and in their personal development. This is promoted through the excellent subject knowledge of specialist teachers in these areas.
- As one pupil commented, 'Learning is fun and exciting'. This reflects the many different sorts of learning experience, including visits and residential trips, practical activities and problem solving, that capture and hold pupils' interest and imagination. These activities make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Responses from parents and carers showed that virtually all believed their child was well taught in school. As one parent commented, 'Our children learn how to learn.' A broad range of indicators, including the school's own monitoring records, shows high quality teaching to be the norm throughout all key stages. Pupils learn exceptionally well because teaching is lively, engaging, and well paced.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use assessment information well to plan work that is extremely well matched to the needs of all pupils. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, pupils made exceptional progress because the class teacher was skilled in structuring tasks carefully and effectively checked each individual pupil's understanding throughout the lesson, intervening where appropriate and so enabling all to learn at a rapid pace.
- The skills of communication, language, and literacy are exceptionally well taught, giving

children in Reception and pupils in Key Stage 1 an excellent start. For example, pupils in Year 1 successfully tackled some challenging words and made confident use of letters and sounds, helped by adept questioning by the teacher and careful checking of their progress.

- The teaching of reading is outstanding. It helps pupils to understand unfamiliar words and phrases, whilst developing their skills in retrieving facts and interpreting situations.
- Problem-solving challenges and collaborative working allow pupils to think creatively, developing their ability to investigate and explore across all subjects. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children made outstanding progress in their understanding of capacity through investigating the correct amount of water for 'Baby Bear' to drink, by correctly measuring different containers of water. Effective questioning by the teacher ensured that they deepened their learning and could explain their choices in mathematical terms. Marking and feedback to pupils are highly effective. As a result, pupils make rapid progress and talk confidently about what they are doing and the steps they need to take to improve them further.
- Teachers' expert knowledge of the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs means that intervention and support sessions, including those in the resource base, are skilfully shaped according to pupils' different abilities, to promote high achievement.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support, especially with regard to those who have special educational needs, ensuring their needs are met fully.
- Excellent relationships enable teachers to draw pupils into discussions that make a particularly good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, accepting that actions have consequences. They work with others and accept them regardless of background or ability.

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

- High expectations, clear boundaries for behaviour and conduct, positive staff role models and effective use of praise all contribute to pupils feeling exceptionally safe at all times.
- Pupils speak confidently about how staff are always on hand to help them if they have a worry or concern. They are taught how to keep themselves safe and have an excellent awareness of potential dangers. This includes those presented by social network sites on the internet. They are confident that if any aspect of bullying occurs, it will be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards school and learning which are reflected in their improving attendance rate. Pupils report that lessons are not disturbed by anyone because lessons are fun. Inspectors found that lessons invariably run smoothly because pupils of all ages behave exceptionally well and are ready and willing to learn.
- The school is a very calm and orderly community. Pupils are effective in not only managing their own behaviour but that of others. In a lesson where one of the younger pupils was becoming over-excited, his peers encouraged him to re-focus on the lesson, praising him when he was back on task.
- The mutual respect between adults and pupils is apparent in their happy, friendly relationships throughout the day. Pupils know they are valued as individuals. They relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. One pupil described how being a lunchtime buddy made her feel 'very proud'.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher is relentless in her pursuit of excellence in all of the school's activities. She demonstrates an uncompromising and highly successful drive to maintain the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils.
- The school has improved on its good outcomes of the last inspection. Reflective and self-critical monitoring and evaluation ensure that any variations in the quality of learning are accurately identified and quickly remedied. As a result, changes have been implemented which have led

to significant improvements in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress made by pupils, particularly the most able, in these areas has been notable.

- The leadership and management of teaching are outstanding. Rigorous management of teachers' performance and the well-developed programme for staff training ensure continuous improvement. Financial promotion is not automatic but is linked securely to performance. As a result, the overall quality of teaching has improved from good to outstanding since the previous inspection.
- Systems to check pupils' progress are rigorous and data tracking is used very effectively to check and improve how well pupils are doing. However, the school rightly recognises that there is scope to simplify the current systems so that they show more clearly the excellent progress pupils make across key stages.
- The school's rich and varied curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. It provides memorable experiences and ample opportunities for high-quality learning and wider enrichment. Staff seize every chance to widen pupils' horizons and broaden their first-hand learning experiences. The recent trip to Rushall Farm not only gave older pupils the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities, but also provided an excellent stimulus for follow-up work in school.
- The provision for those who have special educational needs, including the resource-based pupils, results in pupils being successfully integrated into all aspects of the school's work. Staff work diligently to promote equality of opportunity, making certain that all potential barriers to pupils' progress and discrimination are eradicated.
- The local authority provides very light touch support for this outstanding school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- demonstrates an accurate understanding of the school's strengths in provision and outcomes for pupils
- is not afraid to question and challenge leaders when necessary
- makes highly effective use of performance management to continuously improve school outcomes for pupils, including for those known to be eligible for the pupil premium
- ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including those relating to the safeguarding and well-being of pupils.

## 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>	109980
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403101

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	249
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Penny Myers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Catherine Morley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7–8 November 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01189 302239
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