

Waterside Combined School

Black Horse Avenue, Chesham, Buckinghamshire, HP5 1QU

Inspection dates 15–16 November 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has made significant improvement since its last inspection. Pupils' rates of progress have quickened notably, enabling pupils to reach higher standards.
- A large amount of teaching is good which supports the pupils' good progress.
- The staff take very good care of the pupils. Parents are happy about their children's education.
- The governing body benefits from excellent leadership and also has other skilled members. It has played a very important part in the improvements that have been made.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- The care taken with new teaching appointments and the improvements made have increased pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
- The leadership of teaching is good and a range of activities to check teaching quality are helping to maintain the improvements and improve pupils' achievement.
- The local authority has provided good support for the school and played a significant part in the improvements made.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Spelling and handwriting are not yet as good as they might be.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to investigate and solve problems in mathematics and there are missed opportunities to apply their knowledge of number to real-life situations.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 11 lessons or parts of lessons. Three of these were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Formal discussions were held with the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- The inspector heard pupils read and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector examined the 19 responses on Parent View, the government's website for parents' views of schools, and also the school's most recent survey of parental opinions.
- A discussion was held with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- A formal discussion was held with pupils.
- The inspector examined progress data and other school documentation, including safeguarding information.
- A formal discussion was held with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body.

Inspection team

Peter Sudworth, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a one-form entry primary school with seven classes, which is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Children begin the Nursery stage in January or at Easter and are integrated into the Reception class, before officially transferring to this class in the September before their fifth birthday.
- The school supports 14% of its pupils at school action which is an above-average proportion and a further 11% at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs which is also above average. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is around the national average.
- A higher percentage of pupils than nationally, at 35%, is entitled to the pupil premium, extra government funding for pupils who are entitled to free school meals and looked after pupils.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The deputy headteacher is in her first term in the school.
- A children's centre adjoins the school but it is managed separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take steps to improve pupils' spelling and handwriting skills by:
 - paying greater attention to these aspects of writing in different subjects
 - planning a programme which includes spelling patterns
 - ensuring the pupils learn words that they frequently use but spell wrongly.
- Provide more occasions for pupils to use their knowledge of number in real-life settings and increase the opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children enter the Reception year, their skills are often well below expectations especially in speaking, listening, understanding of language and their knowledge of the world. While they make good progress in the Reception class, their skills are below average by the end of the Reception year in most areas of their learning.
- Pupils make good progress. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 have been rising in reading, writing and mathematics and in 2012 reached the national average. There has been a big increase in the percentage of pupils who securely reach the expected level. The school obtained results around the national average in the 2012 national test for Year 1 pupils which checks their phonic skills (the link between letters and sounds).
- Results at the end of Year 6 have also been rising and now reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics despite the above average percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. These pupils make good progress because of well-planned programmes of work for them and good adult support. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also make good progress.
- Pupils are interested in writing because of imaginative approaches covering a good range of writing styles, including poetry. In one piece of writing, a Year 6 pupil wrote, 'As I went outside, the hail shot an evil grin at me.' However, spelling and handwriting are weaker aspects of writing. The good use of writing in all subjects supports their growing confidence in this aspect of their work. In science, for example, pupils wrote to Aristotle to provide evidence to back up his theory that the earth is spherical. Pupils improve their speaking and listening skills as they move up through the school and these are appropriate for their age.
- Pupils' setting out of their work in mathematics supports accuracy. However, their ability to use mathematics and investigate is hampered by a lack of opportunities. Pupils respond well to the marking of their books in both mathematics and English. Times set apart for pupils to consider marking comments benefit pupils' work significantly. Pupils learn from their mistakes.
- Pupils know where they are heading with their work because they are given a list of what they must do to get to the next level. This is spurring the pupils on to do their best. The weekly achievement award assembly makes the pupils feel good about themselves and gives them confidence to succeed and achieve well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Good teaching, including a little that is outstanding, has a major influence on the quality of work and pupils' progress. Lessons are well prepared and mostly cater well for pupils' different needs. However, very occasionally work for more able pupils is too difficult and they cannot fully understand it. Practical resources are used effectively to help the pupils' understanding.
- Teachers make good use of things that the pupils can see. Electronic screens are well prepared with the work for the lessons so that they can see what they have to do. These screens are sometimes used to show video clips which excite pupils about their learning. Teachers share well with the pupils how they can be successful in their learning.
- Lessons are conducted in a calm and pleasant atmosphere. Respectful relationships give pupils confidence to answer in class. Lessons begin promptly and learning resources are well prepared so time is not wasted.
- Good questioning encourages pupils to reason their answers. Sometimes teachers put pupils together in pairs to consider a response. This approach works effectively and also helps speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching assistants support groups well in lessons and also with reading. The teaching of reading is good. Grouping pupils by their knowledge of letter sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 helps to ensure that this work meets their needs. Recent

introduction of reading recovery, for individuals who struggle in early reading, is already working well and boosting pupils' confidence.

- Teachers do not always set high enough expectations in handwriting and spelling and presentation suffers. They are not insistent enough in ensuring that pupils pay enough attention to letters that sit on the line or have tails below it and so letters can be uneven in appearance. They do not ensure that pupils have a broad enough range of content in mathematics, including investigation and the use of real-life situations.
- Teachers make good use of visits both locally and further afield to support learning. Visits to the river and the local town support both historical and geographical studies. Outings to museums and galleries in London contribute to cultural understanding.
- Staff support pupils well who have special educational needs, in small groups. Staff identify pupils with learning difficulties early on and programmes to help with their difficulties are successful. One-to-one tuition has been particularly successful.
- Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is good. Children really enjoyed their activities related to the Hindu festival Diwali, dressing up and acting out the story that is at the heart of the occasion and making and tasting Indian food in the 'restaurant'. Time is well balanced for these children to work on their own or as a group.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils listen respectfully to the views of others and try hard with their work, showing interest in it. They display good learning attitudes. Behaviour around the school is also good. Pupils are polite and courteous, for example holding open doors for others.
- Pupils behave well outdoors and play happily together. They are aware of different types of bullying. They mention that a little bad behaviour occurs from time to time, including a little bullying, but that it is not a major concern and is managed well by the staff. Records indicate that behaviour is usually good over time.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in the adults. They are keen to attend. Attendance has improved and is above the national average. Pupils are happy at school and enjoy learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe. They know about safety matters when crossing roads, of the danger of ice on ponds and that they should not talk to strangers.
- Pupils undertake their responsibilities well. Some help serve meals at lunchtime and others were involved in drawing up questions to ask candidates at interview. The school council meets regularly and has been successful in its efforts both to raise money for charity, which they choose themselves, and also in raising money to buy playground equipment which pupils enjoy.

The leadership and management

are good

- The school has benefited from advice to improve rates of progress. It has worked successfully with local authority advisory staff and governors. Subject leaders have made a good start in overseeing the subjects for which they have responsibility. They are developing their skills further in observing lessons and in the use of different forms of evidence to check the quality of teaching and learning.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are detailed for both individuals and groups of pupils and data analysis is thorough. The headteacher's reports to the governing body are most detailed, providing very helpful information which adds to governors' knowledge of the school. The plan to raise attainment further is well thought out.
- The school's links with parents are secure. Written communication with them is regular. Parents have opportunities to give their views through questionnaires and a parent forum. The school has acted on parents' lack of knowledge about what their children study in school. Parents now receive termly information about this feature.

- The curriculum is well organised, with not only generally good attention to basic skills but also to the development of skills in other subjects, including religious education which supports pupils' cultural and spiritual development. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematics skills to real-life situations and to investigate number. Pupils enjoy a good range of out-of-school activities, including different sports. Years 5 and 6 pupils enjoy a residential visit which helps to promote their social skills. Good attention is paid to ensuring all pupils are treated equally and that there is no discrimination.
 - The school has good procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance, with good detail provided to back up the school's judgements of itself. Senior leadership team meetings are regular with a clear focus on continuing improvements. Members of this team show a good example by their own teaching and dedication to their work.
 - Appraisal arrangements, by which staff's performances are annually reviewed, work well. Staff feel supported by the system and the training opportunities provided. Procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning take place regularly and helpful points are made to improve teaching further.
 - Safeguarding arrangements are good because checks are kept to protect pupils, staff have regular training and policies are practical and provide helpful advice. All staff are aware of those pupils whose circumstances and background are not always easy.
 - Pupil premium money has been well spent on one-to-one tuition, staffing and resources and is having a good impact on the progress of those pupils for whom it is intended and evidenced in improved rates of progress.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is strong. The governing body receives excellent direction from its Chair, who is ably supported by the Vice-Chair. There is good expertise among the governing body. Finance is well managed and shown by the fact that the school maintains one class for each year group despite below average numbers. Governors are involved in decisions about pupil premium money expenditure, but acknowledge that they need to be more incisive about the evidence base for the use of money spent. They have a good understanding of data, holding specific meetings to study this, and also performance management. Members' links with year groups enable them to know the pupils and staff well and to keep abreast of school developments. The governing body questions effectively and holds the school to account for the attainment of its pupils. The Chair works closely and effectively with the headteacher. Governors attend training in order to increase their knowledge about their roles. They understand the link between reviews of teachers' work and the salary received and also the limits imposed because of the school's own tight budget. Their subject and class links, together with information from the headteacher, enable them to gain an accurate view about teaching quality.
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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	110337
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	405279

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Cornford
Headteacher	Gareth Drawmer
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 September 2010
Telephone number	01494 786608
Fax number	01494 773287
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