

# Aragon Primary School

Aragon Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4QU

**Inspection dates** 20–21 November 2012

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

- Achievement for pupils is good. The amount of progress that all groups of pupils make, regardless of their starting points, is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy school and feel safe and well cared for by the adults around them. Behaviour is good.
- Teaching is typically good. On occasions it is outstanding. The teaching of reading is particularly effective. Pupils read confidently, fluently and with enjoyment.
- The Nursery classes are well organised and provide interesting activities that help the children make good progress in their learning.
- The headteacher and leadership team know exactly what the school does well and where improvement is needed. As a result, all staff are clear about the areas for development, for example in mathematics.
- The governing body works well in supporting the school leaders but also challenges them to ensure improving outcomes for the pupils.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' skills and understanding in mathematics are not as well developed as those in reading and writing. This is because calculation skills are not always taught consistently well.
- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding because pupils are not given precise feedback on their learning in all subjects so they can understand how to improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- At the time of the inspection Year 3 were on a residential trip.
- Inspectors observed 29 lessons, including a learning walk. Two of the lessons were jointly watched with senior leaders. Inspectors observed a lower school assembly and an upper school singing assembly.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, both formally and informally, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at samples of the pupils' workbooks.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took into account 47 parental responses recorded on the online questionnaire (Parent View) and two emails from parents and carers. In addition inspectors held informal discussions with parents and carers when they dropped their children off to school on the second morning of the inspection. They also took account of the views of staff through the 25 staff questionnaires completed.

## Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Grace Marriott

Additional inspector

Martin Marsh

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Aragon is a large and growing primary school which is bigger than most others.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium (extra money provided to schools by the government) is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with more severe special educational needs, supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average.
- There are higher-than-average proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, but the number of pupils whose first language is not English is slightly less than average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.
- The school has a community arts studio with two resident artists. This is linked to an international initiative known as the 'Room 13' project.
- The school offers no alternative provision.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' learning from good to outstanding by:
  - planning a wider range of planned mathematics activities that enable pupils to develop greater confidence and speed in calculation
  - ensuring that the good practice in teachers' marking and advice to pupils found in some classes is used consistently across the school, so that pupils are given consistently helpful feedback about how to improve their work in all subjects
  - ensuring that the more-able pupils are always stretched in their thinking and learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Over time, pupils have made good progress in English and mathematics and their attainment has been consistently above the national average.
- Pupils enter the Nursery with skills below the levels typically expected for their age. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress in Nursery and Reception. By the time they enter Year 1, most children exceed the levels expected for their age. They make rapid progress because of the well-planned and engaging activities provided and the quality of the adult-led activities, especially the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make).
- The school's checks on pupils' progress, along with pupils' past and current work, indicate that progress is good across all year groups and within different groups of pupils in English.
- There is some variation in the progress pupils make in mathematics. The school recognises this and is using different ways of remedying the weakness, such as booster classes. The proportion of children gaining the higher levels in mathematics is increasing as pupils are given specialised help and support within school and through an effective link with a local secondary school which has helped to extend their learning.
- Progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with other groups of learners. The progress of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is particularly good with pupils making rapid progress in many cases. The school uses staff and resources skilfully to support the learning of those pupils entitled to additional funding from the government through the pupil premium, ensuring learners achieve well.
- The teaching of reading has a high priority and is particularly effective. Younger pupils have a good understanding of phonics, which they use to good effect when reading and spelling words. The pupils read confidently and with fluency.
- Pupils from different ethnic heritages make good progress and those few pupils at the early stages of learning English achieve well because of close support of adults and activities which are planned well to meet their needs.
- Some small variations exist between the achievement of boys and girls. As a result of specific one-to-one and small-group teaching, the gaps are reducing quickly. The impact of this support is reviewed through the careful monitoring of the progress of boys.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is typically good and improving. There are sometimes variations with some high-quality teaching, but occasionally some teaching that requires improvement.
- Teachers try to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what they are going to learn and provide good examples or models for the pupils to refer to. Teachers are increasingly confident in using information about pupils' progress in their class to plan activities that are matched closely to the abilities of most learners. However, in some lessons the most able were not provided with sufficient challenge to stretch their thinking and learning.
- The introductions to lessons are short, enabling pupils to start work quickly on their own. If some pupils find learning difficult, teachers are quick to help out by changing activities to help them understand better. Teaching assistants provide good support for lower ability pupils and are able to use their knowledge of phonics to teach pupils the skills they need to read well.
- Pupils from different ethnic heritages and those at the early stages of learning English are catered for well as they have good support from adults and well-organised activities to support their learning.
- Pupils say teachers make lessons fun and interesting. The school provides a creative curriculum in Years 1 and 2 and aspects of this are being incorporated into the lessons for older pupils where appropriate. Recently, pupils studying the Tudors explored Anne Boleyn's execution as a

crime scene. One pupil commented, 'We are never bored at school.'

- The school uses trips to places of interest and visits from outside groups to enrich the curriculum and widen the experiences of the pupils. The school employs two resident artists as part of the Room 13 project. The creative results of the collaboration are displayed throughout the school and are of high quality. On inspection the team entered the school through a Tudor banqueting hall complete with pig's head with an apple stuffed in its mouth, albeit plastic.
- The topics of lessons are also made practical and relevant, with opportunities for pupils to explore issues and to be reflective. For example, one Year 6 class investigated the mathematical challenges of budgeting on a state pension and on the minimum wage. This gave the pupils an opportunity to discuss the social and moral dilemmas that different groups in society may have in balancing a limited budget. However, in some lessons, pupils' calculation skills are not fully developed, meaning some are less confident to work out day-to-day problems. For example, in one lesson, pupils chose longer written methods of calculation when quicker mental techniques would have been better.
- Pupils' work in some lessons is well marked, providing them with clear guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils respond well to this and complete the corrections identified by the teacher. However the quality of the marking is variable between classes and between subjects. As a result, a helpful learning dialogue between teacher and pupil does not always develop, which contributes to the inconsistencies in pupils' progress.

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

- Pupils behave well both in lessons and around school. They enjoy learning and display excellent attitudes to learning when the teaching is effective. They work well in pairs and small groups and can discuss questions sensibly, taking turns to share ideas and listen to the points made by others.
- Pupils say there is very little bullying although minor disagreements can occur. Pupils say that staff are on hand and deal effectively with issues if they develop. The school deals with the very occasional incidents of racial unkindness and works to eliminate inappropriate use of homophobic language. Pupils know what is right and wrong.
- Behaviour is rightly viewed as being at least good by all of the school community and there are harmonious relationships between pupils from differing backgrounds. Responses by parents and carers to surveys and questionnaires support this view.
- Pupils have a good awareness of cyber safety and other aspects of personal safety. The school uses outside agencies such as the police and road safety officers to promote the pupils' understanding of 'stranger danger' and road safety.
- Better attendance since the previous inspection suggests that pupils are happy to come to school and feel safe while they are there. This is supported by the positive responses they gave in discussions.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because at times when teaching is less effective, pupils become disinterested with their learning and there is a decrease in their work rate, and at times the behaviour of some dips below the normally good levels.

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

- Senior leaders and members of the governing body lead the school well, but leadership and management are not yet outstanding because there are still weaknesses and variations in the quality of teaching, and pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics do not consistently match those in English.
- The headteacher strives to provide the best opportunities for the pupils and is well supported by the senior leadership team and the governing body. The school leaders have a good understanding of the aspects of learning that need to be developed further and have

implemented a programme to raise standards further. The leadership team demonstrates a good capacity to improve the school further.

- Monitoring of pupils' progress is robust and middle leaders are quick to ensure that pupils who are not making expected levels of progress are pinpointed quickly and given the right sort of help. Additional resources from the pupil premium grant are effectively supporting less advantaged learners and enabling them to make similar progress to fellow pupils.
- Senior and middle leaders keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The written advice to teachers focuses on the outcomes for learners and increasingly provides good guidance on points to develop the quality of teaching still further.
- A well-planned staff training programme includes a focus on developing mathematics further in school. This is also linked to teachers' performance management targets. The appraisal process for staff ensures that decisions about salary increases are closely linked to the quality of teaching.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school, helping the senior staff review and analyse the outcomes for pupils and helping develop the new members of the leadership team.
- The curriculum helps pupils to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. These aspects run as a thread through the whole school, from the learning about the Eid celebration in the Nursery to the Room 13 enterprise project in Year 6. Themed activities such as Friendship Week raise pupils' awareness of kindness and care for others, while the language of the month programme – currently Bulgarian – enables pupils to reflect on the diversity of the school community and on the community they live in. This aspect is a strength of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has been effective in offering support and challenge to the senior leadership team. Governors are aware of how the attainment of pupils compares with other schools because of their ability to analyse and evaluate achievement information. From this they have raised questions about the progress of specific groups of pupils and how this relates to the quality of teaching and have given senior leaders timescales to show improvements in outcomes. The governing body reviews the financial position of the school and knows how teachers' performance is matched to salary progression and promotion. The governing body is conscientious in fulfilling its statutory requirements, for example, ensuring that staff vetting procedures are carried out to high standards and that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated. Governors have benefited from ongoing training to develop their awareness and understanding of test results and their significance.

## 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>	132167
<b>Local authority</b>	Merton
<b>Inspection number</b>	403643

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>	580
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Chair</b>	Tom Magill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18–19 March 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 83370505
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