

Katesgrove Primary School

Dorothy Street, Reading, RG1 2NL

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2012

	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

- All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Those who speak English as an additional language make particularly good headway due to skilled teaching and an environment rich in visual displays and prompts for key vocabulary.
- Lively and effective teaching in the vast majority of lessons thoroughly engages pupils. Teachers, ably supported by teaching assistants, carefully match work to pupils' various abilities and needs. Highly skilled questioning in most lessons helps pupils to sustain their interest and moves their learning forward.
- The school is a harmonious community where pupils behave well and feel entirely safe. They much appreciate working and playing alongside children from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Through rigorous monitoring of teaching and meticulous analysis of pupils' progress, senior leaders and governors gain a very clear picture of how different groups of pupils are achieving. They are quick to respond where the teaching needs improving and provide effective support and training for staff.
- The curriculum is planned imaginatively and includes many activities which interest pupils and promote their learning and personal development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing is below average. This is mainly because their grasp of grammar is sometimes weak.
- In a few lessons, teachers talk too much, leaving insufficient time for pupils to get to grips with the work in hand. Occasionally, pupils do not receive enough specific guidance during lessons about how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, of which 12 were joint observations with senior leaders. They listened to pupils reading and discussed their reading habits and preferences with them.
- Inspectors discussed various aspects of the school with pupils and looked at a range of their work. They took account of the school’s data on pupils’ attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, members of staff holding senior and middle leadership responsibilities, and a representative from the local authority.
- During the inspection, inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, the school’s own recent parental survey and discussions with parents. They took account of the 18 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, teachers’ plans, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, governing body minutes and records of the school leaders’ monitoring of lessons.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector

Lead Inspector

Margaret Faull

Additional Inspector

Christine Pollit

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average, occupying a Victorian multi-story building near the centre of Reading. At the time of the inspection, major building works were taking place in order to cater for a planned increase in pupil numbers.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery, with 39 places in the morning and in the afternoon, together with three Reception classes.
- Around 80% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds; two-thirds of all pupils speak English as an additional language. Both these proportions are above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the school receives additional funding through Pupil Premium, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs (supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs) is broadly average. These needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties. Some pupils have speech and language problems and a small number are visually impaired.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school outside the usual times is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is no alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher had been acting as the headteacher since September 2011. She was about to take up the substantive post in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing at both key stages by:
 - providing further opportunities for pupils to develop their use of correct grammar through oral activities, including discussions, role play and drama
 - sustaining the current emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills through creating pictorial story sequences and telling stories through choral speaking and gestures.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - striking a good balance of introducing lessons and allowing time for pupils to get on with their own work
 - frequently checking on how pupils are getting on and providing immediate feedback on how to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- As children enter the Nursery or Reception, their social, language and number skills are generally well below those expected for their age. Although they make good progress, by the end of Reception levels of attainment are typically below average.
- The progress of children who speak no English as they begin school is often excellent and means they soon become able to join in confidently with their classmates. Consistently strong support continues through the school and enables them to make good progress.
- As they move through Years 1 and 2, pupils make good headway in reading, writing and mathematics. When reading to inspectors, pupils tackled unfamiliar words well, using their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) systematically. This secure grasp of phonics also enables pupils to make good attempts when writing. This is particularly evident in Year 1, where many pupils already write with joined script and mostly correct spelling. More pupils are on course to reach the higher levels than in previous years, but raising attainment in writing is, rightly, a school priority.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, so, by the end of Year 6, standards are average in English and mathematics. A concerted effort to accelerate progress in mathematics has paid dividends and pupils now make very good progress across Key Stage 2.
- The more able readers in Years 5 and 6 read confidently and expressively but pupils' secure reading skills are not always reflected in their writing, and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing is lower than in reading. Inaccuracies in grammar, for example in the use of tenses and forms of verbs, often detract from the overall quality of their written work.
- The school checks up quickly on the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils who join the school through the year and makes sure that they are put into the right class and working groups. The 40 pupils who had joined the school since September were making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils with moderate learning difficulties or other needs, including speech and language problems, make good gains in their learning due to highly effective support. For example, during a lesson for pupils drawn from Years 3 to 5, including partially sighted children, all groups made very good headway in understanding fractions through a range of practical activities.
- Most pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium make at least the same progress as their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Children's learning in the Nursery and Reception classes is very well supported through a wide range of opportunities for play, together with good teaching of key skills in communication and language, and mathematics. Adults establish warm relationships with the children, closely monitor their progress and provide effective support for their learning within the stimulating indoor and outdoor areas.
- Classrooms across the school abound with prompts for learning, examples of work in progress and displays that celebrate pupils' achievements and serve as exemplars. This means that pupils are rarely short of ideas, for example, about the vocabulary they could include in a story or description.
- Within this attractive and vibrant environment, almost all of the teaching is lively and stimulating. As a result, with few exceptions, pupils are fully engaged and participate eagerly. Teachers' skilful questioning, such as, 'Can you explain that in more detail?' and 'Can anyone add to that?' encourages pupils to respond and gives them confidence to do so without being afraid of getting things 'wrong'. Occasionally, teachers spend too long discussing ideas, which means pupils become restless and do not have enough time to complete the follow-up tasks.
- Phonics teaching is well organised and successful. Pupils across the whole school work in small

groups and benefit from a systematic approach which enables them to build up their skills progressively.

- Teachers go to great lengths to interpret the curriculum in ways that appeal to pupils. For example, a Year 4 lesson was 'interrupted' by the teaching assistant reporting she had found an enormous hat, an axe and the remains of a beanstalk. This prompted an investigation of the 'crime scene' and some well-written news articles about the event.
- A strong focus on encouraging pupils to speak using grammar accurately helps pupils, particularly those whose home language has a different grammatical structure, to express their ideas using the correct sentence structure. This is often done in ways which greatly appeal to pupils. After hearing from an 'expert on unicorns', there was a strong sense of fun as Year 6 pupils refined their use of grammar and devised gestures and actions to accompany their choral description of this mythical beast. A few teachers are not entirely confident in using this approach, however.
- Pupils receive very good feedback through teachers' marking. Sometimes, however, teachers' comments during lessons focus almost entirely on whether pupils have completed tasks rather than on how well they have done so and what they have learned. In addition, pupils are not always told how they can improve their work.
- A wide range of successful teaching strategies, including very effective support by teaching assistants, enables pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly and learn to play together well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous, and warmly welcome visitors, showing pride in their school. In a small minority of lessons, pupils occasionally lose concentration when listening to long introductions.
- Strategies that successfully encourage good behaviour include rewards, such as sitting at the 'top table' at lunchtime, and a 'sanction ladder' that is clearly understood by pupils and implemented fairly and consistently by staff.
- Pupils feel safe and are adamant that bullying is very rare. They are well versed in keeping themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Parents are very confident that their children are well looked after.
- Pupils are justifiably proud of their leadership roles as house captains and vice-captains. They were particularly keen that inspectors should meet the 'pupil interpreters'. They commented on the important job these bilingual pupils do helping new arrivals to feel welcome and settle in.

The leadership and management are good

- Improvement in the school's effectiveness owes much to the drive and ambition of the acting headteacher and the assistant headteachers. They play a pivotal role in moving the school forward. Central to all they do is a determination to promote equal opportunity, foster good relationships, tackle discrimination and ensure all pupils do as well as possible.
 - Following changes in personnel, senior leaders have been strongly supported by the local authority. This has helped to ensure continuity of management and the drive for improvement. The school is well placed to move further forward with light touch support from outside.
 - There is a strong team spirit across the school with all members of staff committed to doing the best job they can. They are extremely well supported in this through the systematic and highly effective monitoring of their work. This includes lesson observations, looking at pupils' books and finding out how they are progressing each term.
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- Teachers are very positive about the management of their performance. They appreciate the specific guidance they receive about how to improve and welcome the opportunities for further training.
 - Staff are encouraged to try out new ideas, with the proviso that improving outcomes for pupils should be the central measure of success. Examples of this innovative approach include joint projects with Reading University in developing pupils' work in mathematics and art. A strong partnership with two local grammar schools provides opportunities for more able pupils to work alongside older students and to attend sessions for gifted and talented pupils.
 - The curriculum is well planned to stimulate and motivate pupils. Key events, including visits outside of and visitors to school, are used to engage pupils at the beginning of topics and units of study. For example, a visit to Hampton Court Palace intrigued pupils and deepened their learning about the Tudors.
 - Staff provide strong role models in their relationships with one another. The celebration of festivals, such as Eid Ul Fitr, Diwali and Easter contribute to pupils' understanding of the similar values of different faiths. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to follow their sporting and artistic interests through clubs, outings and performances.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have an excellent understanding of how assessment information is used to identify strengths and relative weaknesses in pupils' performance. This enables them to ask searching questions about how well the school is doing compared with all schools nationally. This also means they are well placed to contribute to improvement planning and strategic development. They closely monitor the use of the pupil premium. They seek assurances that the funds spent on, for example, providing additional staff and organising play therapy contribute to positive outcomes. Governors maintain a clear oversight of how teachers' performance is managed and ensure that staff whose teaching is consistently effective are suitably rewarded. They set clear, ambitious and achievable targets for the headteacher which focus on the school's core purpose of sustaining and improving its overall effectiveness. The governing body develops its capacity to become even more effective over time through an ongoing commitment to training of governors.
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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	109920
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	401087

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	516
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gill Godfrey
Headteacher	Shelley Lowther
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 September 2009
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