

Owlsmoor Primary School

Cambridge Road, Sandhurst, GU47 0TA

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2012

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Most reach levels of attainment that are above national averages, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who receive additional funding, including the pupil premium.
- Lessons are regularly checked up on by leaders so most are good or better. They are enjoyable, usually well paced and almost always make pupils think for themselves.
- Pupils behave very well. Bullying is extremely uncommon and pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. Teachers provide good care for their pupils.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body are very ambitious for their staff and pupils and have fostered fast improvements in teaching and learning over the last few years.
- The challenges provided by different subjects and activities outside of lessons help pupils develop their very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all lessons help pupils to make rapid progress. Sometimes lessons are too slow paced or pupils are unsure what to do.
- Marking is not always as helpful as it could be when teachers do not make sure pupils fully understand what they need to do to achieve better.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school’s work, and looked at the school’s website and a range of documents, including its policies and assessment records.
- Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 18 teachers over almost 12 hours.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, members of the governing body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 96 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Carolyn Carnaghan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Bennett

Additional Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is above average in size when compared with all primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to the school by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported on school action is above average. The proportion supported on school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make alternative provision for any pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Deliver a greater proportion of outstanding lessons by ensuring that:
 - all lessons are fast paced and make all pupils think hard
 - teachers check that pupils always understand what they have to learn throughout the lesson.
- Ensure that teachers' marking always makes it clear what pupils have to do to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils, including those on school action, school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs, make good progress across the school. The numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels in tests and assessments have risen and achievement is good. Attainment in English and mathematics has improved across the school as a result of teachers' good use of planning and testing. They have a firm understanding of how well pupils are doing and of their individual needs.
- Teachers use information gathered from tests and other assessments to make sure all groups of pupils are progressing well. Where pupils learn in groups that suit their needs, they learn quickly. For example, in a mixed year-group class, pupils wrote enthusiastically about their favourite meal and then read out their work with gusto. Lessons like this are genuinely enjoyable. In a mathematics lesson where some groups of pupils worked independently while others were with the teacher, very fast progress was ensured.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium funding have benefited from the school's excellent planning to use these extra funds. They have received targeted support and help to meet their various needs from dedicated learning support assistants to ensure they do as well as others in both lessons and outside activities. Consequently the gap in attainment (average point score) for this group compared to that of their peers is closing.
- Extra support for some pupils helps ensure equal opportunities for all and that there is no discrimination. Teachers and teaching assistants are very active in helping individuals stay on task and they often help stretch pupils, including those on school action or action plus, to do better.
- Reading and writing are strongly encouraged in school. Pupils enjoy a very wide range of books and their attainment in reading is above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. The basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are made good use of across most subjects. Opportunities to practise these skills are grasped, even in very practical subjects, such as dance. The organisation and teaching of phonics (that is, linking sounds and letters) is excellent.
- The clear focus in all activities on the importance of development as rounded individuals means that pupils are very thoughtful towards one another. They reflect deeply about the world, such as when a class discussed the real implications of coastal erosion on people living nearby, while they were constructing large and impressive models of coastlines.
- Children enter the Nursery with expected levels of skills for their age. Their numbers are raised in Reception by a large group of new arrivals and they make good progress in developing the aptitudes that stand them in good stead for their education. The well-organised classes provide ample opportunities for children to explore new skills in reading and writing while learning how to play well together. The results of teachers' assessments show that many reach levels higher than those expected for their age.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers generally plan their lessons well so that no time is lost. Most lessons are fast paced and enjoyable and the high expectations of teachers rub off on the pupils. Assessment is often exemplary and a key strength of the school. This means that teachers understand their pupils' needs and abilities so they can best deliver experiences in lessons that are challenging and rewarding.
- Where lessons are occasionally less than good, it is because work is not well matched to pupils' needs and pupils do not understand what they should be learning. When this happens, pupils go off-task and learning is slowed down. Sometimes in a few lessons teachers talk for too long and the level of interest drops, but this is unusual.

- Teachers' questioning is of a high standard in most lessons, smartly directed to specific pupils to ensure they are stretched. Pupils are willing to make mistakes in pursuit of learning and the atmosphere of trust and confidence between them means there is no embarrassment when someone gets the answer wrong. Pupils understand their own targets and most appreciate how to improve their work.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is imaginative. Teachers use questioning to make sure children build their understanding. They make effective use of assessment while children are playing and working and there are plenty of chances to use children's growing skills in reading, writing and number. Teachers find it difficult, however, to plan activities across the classes because the Nursery and Reception groups are so spread out around the school site.
- Marking across the school is not always as useful as it could be. Where marking is less than good, teachers do not show clearly how pupils can improve their work. Sometimes teachers use language that does not match that of their pupils so it is hard for pupils to grasp what needs to be done. The best marking forms a conversation between teacher and pupil, with previous mistakes being tackled head-on and rectified. This is an area teachers are working on and improving.
- School leaders strongly support teachers by providing professional training and development, based on their needs. The headteacher and senior managers closely match pupils' results with the performance of teachers, using this to help plan well for the future. Teachers are held accountable for the outcomes of their pupils and this has helped build a strongly cohesive team sharing the same goals.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' excellent behaviour helps ensure that their learning is good; lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils understand that they are expected to be courteous, caring and polite at all times. A recent lively assembly about blindness, given by Year 1 and involving singing and dancing, showed how much older pupils care for those that are younger or who need special help with their education.
- Pupils behave impeccably around the school; their natural respect for one another comes through in their voluntary break-time activities, acting as play leaders for younger children. They exude pride in their school when they accompany parents on their first visit to the school.
- The many opportunities provided to develop self-esteem and confidence are taken up enthusiastically, such as when Year 6 pupils led playground exercises at break-time, resulting in the whole school sharing the event. They usefully act as monitors to help manage movement around the school.
- Pupils have a well-developed knowledge and understanding of bullying in all its forms, including internet bullying, and they are active in ensuring it is very rare. Their appreciation of how to stay safe is excellent in lessons, at the before- and after-school clubs, where well-managed activity is the norm, and on the many trips organised to support the work done in school.
- Pupils' very good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is shown through the way they express their feelings and enjoyment or take time to reflect on their achievements. There is a clear code of conduct that reflects pupils' own views. Pupils express their ideas about the world, showing an excellent grasp of important issues facing mankind, demonstrated, for example, through the rainforest topics. They appreciate the cultures that the small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups bring to their school. Pupils have been involved with celebrating the service given by Nepalese families to their community.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have ensured that most lessons are good or better through the very thorough checking they carry out on teaching and learning. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because not all lessons deliver the high quality learning of the majority, and achievement is still good.
- Leaders and managers have made sure that those who lead others regularly observe teachers in lessons. They have insisted on a close link between teachers' pay and career progression with how well their pupils are achieving. Similarly the support offered to teachers to help them improve their work is also linked to this monitoring.
- This firm understanding of how well pupils are doing is further used to support the development of the subjects and activities pupils are offered, known as 'the curriculum'. This has undergone extensive development so that now pupils enjoy a substantial amount of their time acquiring core skills in English and mathematics, while other parts of the day are devoted to applying them. This topic-based learning is planned around what needs to be learned and what pupils would like to pursue. In this way, pupils have a genuine voice that is listened to in the planning of their week.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very broad range of trips, sometimes residential, and by clubs both before and after school. These include sports, all kinds of music and dance.
- The strong focus by leaders on writing has helped move boys' writing forward. Boys are now enthused by their work because they feel they have something to say. Their achievement is still not as strong as that of the girls, but the gap is very small. The effective use of extra funding for some pupils in providing more one-to-one support, access to extra activities and further tracking of achievement has meant that those eligible for this are now doing as well as, and sometimes better than, their peers.
- The school has benefited from regular visits from the local authority to help it to check accurately how well it is doing. This has supported an effective action plan for the whole school, all closely linked to the needs of pupils. The leadership is highly aware of the need for some lessons to be sharper, better paced and more focused on ensuring pupils know what they need to learn. They are also working hard on improving marking.
- The leadership team has undergone several changes recently. Middle leaders are helping to improve learning in their own subject areas. The whole-school plans are delivering a rise in achievement for all groups and this convinces that the capacity for further improvement is good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body meets regularly with school leaders and has built a very clear understanding of how well pupils are doing. Members closely involve themselves with all aspects of school life, bringing their own expertise to bear. They forge close links with parents, making sure they are there at consultation meetings. They keep abreast of pupil progress meetings and often question and challenge the school's leaders on the fine detail of the results of testing. The governing body keeps a watchful eye on school spending, particularly that linked with pupil premium, ensuring this funding has the desired impact. The governing body has good understanding of how the management of staff performance is closely linked with pupils' achievement and how salary progression is fairly used. They have supported the training of staff where necessary and monitor closely how successful this has been. Members have undergone training to support the safety and well-being of pupils. They have helped the school to remain a safe and secure environment for children and ensured that all safeguarding requirements are met.

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	109870
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	493097

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	535
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Jones
Headteacher	Elizabeth Cole
Date of previous school inspection	28–29 November 2007
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