

St James and St John CofE Primary School

Main Street, Buckingham, MK18 5JE

Inspection dates 13–14 December 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders, including governors, provide good leadership and are relentless in their pursuit of excellence. Teaching is rigorously checked, leading to pupils' good achievement.
- Throughout the school, pupils make outstanding progress in speaking and listening, reading and information and communication technology.
- Teaching is good overall, but it is outstanding in Years 2 and 6 where pupils make excellent progress in their learning.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well in and around the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through an excellent range of visits and visitors.
- Attendance is high and pupils enjoy coming to school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are supportive of all aspects of school life.
- Parents and carers are delighted with everything the school offers but in particular with the way in which their children are treated as individuals.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding in all classes because teachers do not always use information from assessments to speed up pupils' progress, particularly in writing.
- Occasionally, in Year 1, teachers do not help pupils who find learning difficult, to both spell and form their letters correctly.
- In the Reception class, children do not always learn effectively because, when they choose their own activities, adults do not always step in enough to move their learning on.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice and took place over two days.
- The inspector observed 13 lessons taught by seven teachers.
- Documentation was analysed, including that related to teachers' planning, safeguarding, behaviour logs, attendance figures, the school's systems for improving teaching and learning and how the money allocated for pupil premium is spent. The inspector took account of 13 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Questionnaires were analysed from 12 staff.
- The inspector heard a few pupils read and discussed their views of the school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and her staff, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body, pupils and parents and carers.

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school which is situated on two sites. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those in Years 1 and 2 are taught in the village of Akeley while pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught in the neighbouring village of Chackmore.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional government funding, the pupil premium, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and children's rates of progress to outstanding in Reception by:
 - making sure that adults more effectively extend children's skills and knowledge, particularly when they step in during activities that children have chosen for themselves
 - planning more opportunities for children to make marks and learn to write in activities that they choose for themselves.
- Improve teaching and pupils' rates of progress to outstanding in Years 1, 3, 4 and 5, by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to plan activities which are more accurately set at the right level for pupils
 - placing more focus on writing with correct letter formation and spelling in Year 1, when pupils start to write simple words.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with knowledge and skills that are typical for their age. By the end of Reception, children exceed the levels expected of them in all areas apart from writing. However, there are too few opportunities for children to make marks and learn to write during activities they choose for themselves.
- Pupils continue to achieve well in writing and mathematics as they move through Years 1 to 6. Achievement is outstanding in reading, speaking and listening and information and communication technology. In Year 1, pupils have good knowledge of the sounds that letters make and this is evident when they come across difficult words.
- Attainment is above average in Years 2 and 6. By the end of Year 2 pupils are competent readers who tackle difficult words unaided and reach high standards. They understand well what they have read and find information easily from books and by researching the internet.
- Pupils have excellent skills of speaking and listening. They talk clearly with well-chosen words to support their arguments. In Year 6, pupils captured magical moments during a school residential visit by producing high-quality electronic presentations, with inserted film clips, to share with their parents and carers.
- The school has maintained high standards in English over time. Through accurate self-evaluation and successful staff training, standards in mathematics are now at least good. Pupils solve mathematical problems with ease because they know how to follow mathematical language and choose the correct approaches.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make rapid progress because their educational plans are very specific, they receive good support and their progress is regularly checked.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide one-to-one support for eligible pupils. This money has also been used to provide transport for pupils who might not be able to stay for after-school clubs. The school has successfully closed the gap in attainment for these pupils compared with all pupils nationally. They are making good gains in learning and are leaving school well prepared for the next stage of education.
- Pupils in all year groups enjoy reading. They express themselves well, have excellent understanding and they use a very good variety of descriptive words in their writing. Year 5 pupils talked about their favourite authors and their poems entitled 'Reflections' demonstrate their excellent choice of words to describe life's journey. For example one pupil wrote that 'on life's journey we can get broken, if we cannot be repaired we go to rest in heaven'.

The quality of teaching is good

- Children in the Reception class are taught well. Teachers plan a good range of activities, some of which are led by adults while others allow children more free choice. However, during these activities adults do not always successfully step in to reinforce and develop learning.
- Teaching is consistently good across all year groups. Teachers plan work that is interesting and usually suits the different abilities and needs within the classes but, occasionally, all groups of pupils undertake the same activity. This slows progress down because the work is not set at the right level for all groups of pupils.
- Teachers give very good explanations, they expect the best of their pupils and they plan interesting activities for them. Pupils are able to read at length in many subjects. For example, in Year 5, pupils looked at different sets of instructions and identified common features and then compared their instructions with those in real-life instruction manuals.
- Teachers use questioning well to help pupils think about their learning. Well-laid-out classroom displays give prompts for pupils to use when they get stuck and this helps them to find things out for themselves.

- Reading is taught very well. Pupils know the sounds letters make and they become avid readers. The well-resourced libraries are very popular with pupils. Parents and carers hear their children read regularly at home and this helps the outstanding progress pupils make in reading.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, with the best marking in Years 2 and 6 where expert guidance is given to pupils on how best they can improve it.
- Teachers plan many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. In a good Year 4 English lesson, the class teacher mesmerised pupils by uncovering a lava lamp and a guitar as a prompt to develop descriptive words.
- Homework is used well by all teachers to support learning. It is focused on work covered in class and allows pupils to develop their research skills. Parents and carers say that their children enjoy learning because the topics they study are interesting and relevant.
- In all classes teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and treat them as individuals. They know about how they learn best and encourage them at all times to produce high-quality work. However, in Year 1, teachers need to focus more attention on pupils' correct spelling and letter formation to ensure that this does not slow down their rates of progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in all classes and are keen to learn. They show maturity and a desire to do their very best. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in a few lessons seen pupils did not demonstrate the ability to persevere in producing work that was their very best. Occasionally, when work was undemanding, pupils switched off and did not make the progress that they are capable of.
- The school is a safe, calm and orderly place where pupils' welfare is given the highest priority. Teachers know the pupils very well as individuals and what they have to do to develop high self-esteem. Pupils who have transferred from other schools thrive in this environment.
- Pupils say there is no bullying. There is zero tolerance of bullying and should any occur it is swiftly dealt with and parents and carers are informed. Staff are aware of the systems in place for dealing with any kind of bullying. Pupils are aware of all kinds of bullying, including cyber bullying.
- Attendance is high and pupils really enjoy coming to school. Parents and carers know what to do if their children are absent.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. A very recent cyber-bullying incident was dealt with effectively and they are quick to tell their teachers if any name calling occurs. Pupils say that a close eye is kept on them at playtimes to ensure that no one feels left out but there are occasions when play can get rough and they are getting a better awareness of how to respect one another's boundaries.
- The school places a strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities. This supports their good behaviour. Pupils have plenty of opportunities throughout the school to celebrate cultural diversity. They know all about different religious customs and celebrations.

The leadership and management are good

- The highly focused leadership of the headteacher, where every child's personal and academic success matters, has won the respect of the whole school community. Pupils, parents, carers and staff have every faith in the headteacher, senior leaders and governors and are optimistic about the school continuing to improve.
- The management of teaching and learning is very thorough with teachers receiving focused training designed to assist them in improving pupils' achievements.
- Standards are rising, as seen by the improvement in mathematics, and pupils make at least good progress.

- How well pupils are doing is a key consideration for pay awards. Teachers are set targets to help them improve their work linked to the performance of pupils. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and learning rigorously. This has helped to speed up pupils' progress and led to their above-average standards.
- All pupils have equal access to all subjects and topics and the school fosters good relationships with parents and carers and the wider community. At the start and end of every day parents and carers are able to discuss any issues with both the headteacher and staff. They appreciate the open-door policy and the fact that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The local authority recognises that this is a good school and so offers light touch but effective support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are well informed about the school's performance. They are regular visitors to the school and are very supportive of all aspects of school life. They question school performance rigorously, making sure that all pupils have the same chance and that there is no discrimination. They have set robust targets for the headteacher and question the school's performance in relation to other schools. Governors make sure that pay is linked to performance. They have a good understanding of progress information and ask relevant questions about how pupils are doing in different subjects. Finances are managed well and governors see that the pupil premium funding is allocated prudently and whether this has closed the gap in attainment for pupils with all pupils nationally, especially as a result of targeted support for individual pupils. Members of the governing body have undertaken professional training from the local authority on carrying out their statutory duties.

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	110410
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	403116

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Coxall
Headteacher	Gill Pedder
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2007
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