

Great Horwood Church of England Combined School

School End, Great Horwood, Milton Keynes, MK17 0RG

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

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.

- Pupils' achievement has improved and is now good. Attainment is above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils learn quickly and enjoy school because teachers provide interesting activities that are just right for their abilities.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in response to the consistent and clear guidance on good behaviour and positive relationships given by all members of staff.
- Strong leadership is ensuring that teaching and learning are monitored rigorously. As a result, teaching is good, and the school is improving rapidly and gaining popularity in the area.
- Members of the governing body know the school well and have contributed positively to its improvement.
- Parents and carers are exceptionally positive about the school and an overwhelming majority would recommend it to another parent.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In the very few lessons that require improvement, not all pupils are fully involved in discussions, questions could be more probing and pupils are not expected to work quickly throughout the lesson.
- Pupils are not always expected to respond straight away to advice given through teachers' marking.
- Some opportunities are missed for pupils to build on their literacy and numeracy skills when working in other subjects.
- A few girls lack confidence in carrying out calculations in mathematics and, as a result, girls do not do as well as the boys in this subject.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons with nine being observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspector took into account 63 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and held informal discussions with a sample of parents and carers.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in 21 staff questionnaires.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- About 13% of pupils are supported through school action. This proportion is above the national average. Six per cent of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, which is broadly average.
- Four per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional money provided by the government). This is well below the national average.
- The school has an above-average proportion of pupils of Romany or Gypsy heritage.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for its pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been several changes of staff since the last inspection, including the headteacher, who joined the school in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is good and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that teachers involve all pupils in discussions and questioning is always sufficiently probing
 - ensuring that pupils work more quickly throughout each lesson
 - enabling pupils to be more able to improve their work by responding quickly to advice given through marking.
- Enhance learning by:
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills when working in other subjects
 - improving teaching in mathematics so that girls are more confident about making calculations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children are working within the levels normally found for their age when they start school in the combined Nursery and Reception class. They make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in reading and number work. Most are working at or beyond the expected levels when they enter Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress between Years 1 and 6. Rigorous procedures for monitoring pupils' progress have enabled leaders to tackle the underachievement they found in Years 1 to 4 shortly after the last inspection. All groups of pupils are now doing well. Attainment has risen each year since the last inspection and is above average by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- English is stronger than mathematics because a few girls lack confidence when making calculations. For example, in one lesson on place value in Year 5, girls were reluctant to volunteer answers to calculations and were unsure if their written answers were right. Occasionally, pupils do not learn quickly enough, especially in mathematics lessons when they are not fully involved and encouraged to work sufficiently hard.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because they are given good support in class that is tailored to their individual needs.
- Pupils who qualify for the pupil premium make the nationally expected progress, but their attainment by Year 6 was lower than that of other pupils at the school in the national tests in 2012. Leaders carefully assess and monitor individual pupils, and provide relevant resources, such as one-to-one support and funding for visits. Consequently, the attainment gap is closing, with pupils up to Year 4 now attaining at least as well as others in their year group.
- Pupils of Romany or Gypsy heritage make good progress because their culture is respected and the school works closely with parents and carers to ensure that additional support is provided if needed.
- Pupils' development of good literacy and numeracy skills supports their learning, although some opportunities are missed for pupils to extend what they have learnt in writing and mathematics lessons when working in other subjects. Pupils make good use of their skills in information and communication technology to enhance their learning. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the more-able pupils used their netbooks to find out rules about how numbers can be divided.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good because leaders identify how teaching can be improved and provide teachers with support if they need it.
- Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception class helps to establish clear routines and a joy in learning. For example, in a session on sounds and letters, children put away their whiteboards and pens without any delay whatsoever and, in numeracy, they thoroughly enjoyed putting the toys in numerical order.
- Teachers form good relationships with the pupils and use praise judiciously, enabling them to manage behaviour with ease. They provide a good range of interesting activities that engage the pupils' interest and promote quick learning. One pupil spoke for others by saying, 'We learn more when we have fun doing it.'
- Good subject knowledge is shared and teachers refer back to pupils' prior learning so that learning is well structured and builds on past work. For example, in Year 3, the teacher reminded pupils of what they had recently learnt about sounds and letters to assist them with their spelling.
- A wide range of resources is used well to enhance learning, and teaching assistants are employed effectively in supporting the work of small groups of pupils, including disabled pupils

and those who have special educational needs.

- Teachers mark work frequently and point out pupils' next steps well, especially in literacy. As some pupils said, 'They put improvements in a kind way' and 'They offer to have a little session on your weaknesses.' Pupils are, however, not always expected to follow up this guidance straight away.
- Teachers ask some good questions but do not always ensure that all pupils take part in thinking about them and sharing answers. Some opportunities are missed to follow up answers to questions with more searching ones to extend pupils' thinking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and are polite and friendly. The behaviour policy has been reviewed and consequently, incidents of poor behaviour have dropped dramatically and there have been no recent cases. Pupils know how to go about sorting out minor upsets themselves by following their 'debug' system of actions. Pupils' enjoyment of school is very evident and they make positive comments such as, 'Everyone in school is kind' and 'We have great friendships.'
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school, and all parents and carers who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agree that pupils stay safe and behave well. Pupils know how to stay safe and report that bullying is rare. One pupil said, 'I know there have been no major cases because we would have had an assembly on it.' They are confident about how to ask for help should they need it and know that incidents are dealt with straight away.
- Pupils listen carefully and work well with each other in most lessons. They are keen to suggest who deserves a house point for 'listening really well' or 'doing good work'. Occasionally, when they are not kept working quickly, their attention wanders.
- The school works successfully in tackling discrimination, and pupils respect cultural differences and value the views of others. Pupils take responsibility seriously and the school council is proud of its contribution to raising funds for charity and a new climbing wall.
- The attendance of most pupils is above average. The school is working hard with the few families who find it difficult to make sure their children attend the school regularly, because of their travelling lifestyle.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have worked well with other members of staff to secure rapid improvement in the school since the last inspection. For example, pupils now have good opportunities to develop practical skills in science and learn more quickly in English and mathematics. There is a shared vision, and strengths and areas for development are fully understood. Decisive action is taken to tackle remaining areas that require further improvement.
- Self-evaluation is rigorous and in keeping with the high expectations leaders have for all aspects of the school's work. The underperformance in teaching and learning identified shortly after the last inspection has been tackled firmly and performance management has been effective in driving up the quality of teaching.
- Leaders provide good role models in their own teaching and have worked alongside colleagues in coaching and supporting them as needed. Consequently, most teaching is now good and the remainder is improving quickly. Information on pupils' progress is used to detect pupils who are at risk of falling behind so that interventions can be put into place straight away.
- Leaders are aware that some opportunities are missed to extend literacy and numeracy skills when pupils are working in other subjects and to ensure that all girls are always supported fully in mathematics so that they can be confident in their calculations.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, helping pupils to become thoughtful and well-behaved young citizens. One pupil reflected maturely on faith by saying,

'Religions started from the same root and are like a tree with different branches' and another said 'Fights about religions are silly.'

- The school promotes equal opportunities rigorously, for example by enabling disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to achieve as well as other pupils.
 - Safeguarding is high on the school's agenda and requirements are met in full. Meticulous records demonstrate the rigour with which responsibilities are carried out.
 - The local authority has provided the right level of support during a time of transition in staffing and helps to provide training to improve teaching further.
 - The school works closely with parents and carers, and outside agencies, to support learning, and as a result, parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school. Typical comments include, 'The children have made good progress over the past year' and 'You can always talk to a teacher.'
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a clear picture of what is happening in school and are aware of how performance management is having a positive influence on teaching. They scrutinise attainment and progress data and understand how it compares with similar schools. The budget is handled well and the recent deficit has been successfully tackled without compromising the quality of provision. Governors monitor the spending of pupil premium funding and know that it is having a positive impact on the progress of the pupils concerned. For example, various additional teaching programmes have resulted in accelerated progress and netbooks have supported homework successfully. Governors benefit from ongoing training so that they can refine their roles.
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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	110441
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	405284

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Ellison
Headteacher	Paul Adams
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 March 2011
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Fax number	01926 713968
Email address	office@greathorwood.bucks.sch.uk

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