

# Brightwell-cum-Sotwell CofE (C) Primary School

Greenmere, Wallingford, OX10 0QH

**Inspection dates** 20–21 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Levels pupils reach at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average and have consistently been higher than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Almost all pupils reach the level expected for their age. In 2012, the school featured in a government list of 100 top performing schools, based on sustained improvement using this measure.
- Good teaching enables pupils of all abilities and backgrounds to achieve well. Teachers make sure that lessons meet pupils' varying needs by setting different tasks for different groups.
- Teaching assistants play an important role in helping pupils who may be falling behind to catch up.
- In reading, outstanding rates of progress mean that the majority of pupils reach above average levels by the time they leave. The teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is strong and younger pupils use these skills very well to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Pupils are extremely polite and courteous and behave well. They are very positive about their experiences of school and their attendance is above average. Pupils say they feel very safe in school, and the overwhelming majority of parents agree.
- Leaders have secured significant improvements since the previous inspection. From middle leaders through to the governing body, there is an increased sense of rigour and purpose in the shared determination to continue improving the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Across the school, pupils do not do as well in writing and mathematics as they do in reading, so fewer pupils reach above average levels. Pupils also make less rapid progress in Years 3 and 4.
- Pupils do not always get the chance to use teachers' marking to improve their work.
- More able pupils achieve well, but are not always challenged to do as well as they can, sometimes, because the pace in lessons is not quick enough.
- When observing lessons, leaders do not always check carefully enough how well different pupils are learning.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 10 lessons across all five classes, as well as sampling five additional help sessions where teaching assistants were working with individual pupils. All of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector reviewed pupils' work alongside the headteacher and talked with pupils about their learning and experiences of school.
- Discussions were also held with parents, staff, school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 56 responses to the online survey (Parent View), as well as 15 other letters and communications addressed to the inspector from parents. Questionnaires returned by 10 staff were also analysed.
- The inspector observed the school's work and reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including information about the progress of pupils currently in school, the school's own monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching, records of behaviour and incidents, safeguarding documentation and the minutes of meetings held by the governing body.

## Inspection team

Clive Dunn, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. All children except for Year 6 pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at the school action level is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children of service families) is much lower than the national average. There are no children looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The governing body is responsible for the school's breakfast club provision. It does not manage the on-site preschool provision, which was not part of this inspection.

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

- Secure consistently rapid progress in writing and mathematics, particularly in Years 3 and 4, to increase the proportions that reach above average levels at the end of each key stage by:
  - making sure lessons move at a pace that maximises learning for pupils
  - matching teaching and tasks more sharply to pupils' differing needs, in particular making sure that more able pupils are stretched, particularly in mathematics
  - always giving pupils opportunities to respond to teachers' marking.
- Ensure leaders focus rigorously on the learning of different groups when observing lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently above average and higher than at the time the previous inspection. This shows good progress across the school from pupils' varying starting points.
- Different groups of pupils achieve well, reflecting the school's successful promotion of equal opportunities. Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium close any gaps there might be between their own levels and those of their peers. The average points scores (a method of measuring attainment) for those that were reaching the end of Key Stages 1 or 2 in 2012 shows that their attainment was well above that of all pupils nationally in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well because of the effective support by skilled teaching assistants, particularly during additional help sessions. These sessions are purposeful, clearly focused and make very effective use of this valuable time.
- The proportions of pupils that reach above average levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are significantly higher than national averages in reading. These proportions are lower in writing and mathematics, although usually still marginally higher than national figures. More able pupils achieve well in lessons, but often could move on even more quickly. Pupils mostly report that their work is not too easy or too hard, but more able pupils are not always stretched enough to achieve exceptionally well.
- The small numbers in each year group make it difficult to compare different cohorts, but overall, children start school with the levels of knowledge, understanding and skills typically expected for their age. A good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that children quickly begin to close any gaps in their learning and skills compared with other children.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. Strong phonics teaching leads to pupils readily using and applying this knowledge when reading unfamiliar words. Pupils of all abilities often self-correct when they make a mistake, also demonstrating an understanding of their books.
- Accelerating rates of pupil progress have ensured achievement in writing and mathematics is good overall. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 has risen each year since the previous inspection, matching improvements seen nationally. Pupils' writing is increasingly lively and interesting, because pupils choose words carefully and make decisions about how to vary sentences and the structure of their writing to engage the reader. The school is rightly working on building pupils' stamina to sustain the same quality when writing at greater length.
- Pupils' progress slows in Years 3 and 4 before accelerating again through Years 5 and 6. While pupils do not lose any of the ground they have made up across Key Stage 1, teaching and activities are not matched sharply enough to their differing abilities in the Years 3 and 4 class, so pupils do not do as well as they could.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good in most classes. Teachers plan different tasks to make sure that pupils of all abilities can make good progress from their differing starting points. Teachers ask effective questions that prompt pupils to make links with their prior learning to deepen their understanding.
- Positive relationships between pupils and with adults create a secure and calm learning environment for pupils. Teachers often use imaginative ideas and short activities to interest and engage pupils, as seen throughout phonics teaching across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Pupils report that one of the best things about the school is that 'Teachers make learning fun!'
- Where teaching is outstanding, it is because expectations of all pupils, including the most able, are consistently high. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, an open-ended investigative task had

high levels of challenge. Pupils worked exceptionally well together, persevering with the task. The excellent subject knowledge of the adults meant that they offered tailored support and asked probing questions focused strongly on the learning and process rather than a 'correct answer'. Leaders are rightly beginning to share this best practice across the school, where the level of challenge for different groups in mathematics is not consistently sharp enough to secure exceptional progress.

- Purposeful and effective teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage makes children's intended learning clear, as seen when they were learning to sort items according to weight and use the relevant vocabulary. In the post-office role play area, children independently sorted parcels while one of several adult-led activities explored different types of scales for weighing. Adults' observation, assessment and tracking of children's progress are meticulous, ensuring that children's needs are well met.
- Skilled teaching assistants enhance learning, particularly for pupils who require additional help, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They very effectively use praise and encouragement and are gentle but firm in maintaining high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- At times, the pace of lessons slows, which prevents pupils from making more rapid progress, particularly the more able pupils who could get on more quickly.
- Teachers' detailed marking clearly identifies for pupils what they have done well and how to improve their work. However, the impact of this is sometimes lost because pupils have not had the opportunity to read and respond to the good advice. That said, pupils report that marking helps them to know how well they are doing. Pupils know their individual next-step targets and teachers make good references to these in lessons. Older pupils know the levels they are working at and aiming for.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about how well they all get along together. They report that any rare inappropriate behaviour is no more than one or two pupils occasionally 'calling-out'. School records and the views of staff reinforce pupils' views. Occasionally, when the pace of lessons slows, a few pupils lose focus and do not remain engaged with their learning, although this seldom disrupts others.
- Pupils readily accept additional responsibilities, ranging from being school councillors, to play-leaders, to chicken monitors. They develop high levels of maturity and are considerate and supportive of each other.
- Pupils are emphatic that there is no bullying. They have a good understanding of the differences between bullying and the occasional 'fallout'. Pupils report that because adults deal quickly and effectively with small issues that may arise, it prevents these from becoming bullying. This is a clearly adopted strategy, and the school's careful tracking of low-level incidents reinforces this picture.
- As a cohesive community built on positive relationships, the school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. Racial incidents are extremely rare and tackled robustly.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school at all times and the overwhelming majority of parents agree. Pupils develop a good awareness and understanding of how to stay safe, including when using the internet.

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

- Under the determined leadership of the headteacher, staff and leaders at all levels work well together to ensure the school continues to improve. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness, shown by the action already underway to lift achievement further in writing and mathematics.
- Support from the local authority has been invaluable in getting the school on the right track and

increasing the effectiveness of school leaders. The extension of rigorous systems for reviewing pupils' progress six times yearly play a vital part in improvements to pupils' achievement the school is securing. This involves class teachers and senior leaders, including the governing body, strengthening the sense of accountability at all levels for how well pupils are doing. As a result, the school clearly demonstrates the capacity to sustain further improvement.

- Subject leaders are increasingly involved in strengthening the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, including through observing teaching and providing teachers with feedback to help them improve. When monitoring lessons, leaders at all levels do not focus sharply enough on how well pupils of different abilities are learning. Science leadership has improved strongly since the previous inspection, securing important developments in pupils' investigation skills as they move through the school.
- The broad range of subjects studied provides well for pupils' academic achievement while effectively promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils value the wide-ranging musical and sporting opportunities offered, from singing at the O2 Arena to representing the school at local sports tournaments. Pupils are highly respectful and responsive to opportunities for personal reflection.
- The large majority of parents that responded to Parent View expressed positive views in almost all areas. The views of parents who spoke with the inspector were mostly positive and almost all of the letters and other communications from parents sent to the inspector were positive. Leaders have given greater priority than might typically be seen to building relationships with parents, including frequent consultation on various aspects of the school's provision (including the Breakfast Club), an annual 'Visions and Values' evening, wide-ranging regular workshops for parents at different times of the day, providing more precise information about how pupils are doing, and holding open afternoons. The school's own survey results present a more positive picture than those on Parent View, where a small minority of parents express remaining concerns. Leaders' evaluations of how successful strategies to improve links with parents have been are already underway, with plans in place to respond to the findings accordingly.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has a detailed knowledge and understanding of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching. Governors make effective use of national benchmarks to evaluate levels of achievement. They frequently use data from the internal tracking of pupils' progress to question leaders, indicative of their increasing rigour, determination and challenge to secure improvements. They understand how pupil premium funding has contributed to the costs of individual additional-help sessions and enhanced family support as appropriate. Governors ensure that robust systems for managing the performance of staff link well with whole-school improvement priorities and focus strongly on accelerating rates of pupil progress. There is no automatic pay progression and teachers recognise the high expectations required to pass through the upper pay threshold. Regular training supports the increasing effectiveness of the governing body. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

## 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>	123144
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402139

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	117
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	James Davys
<b>Headteacher</b>	Liz Hunt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21–22 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01491 837024
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