

Downsway Primary School

Warbreck Drive, Tilehurst, Reading. RG31 6FE

Inspection dates 27–28 February 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

- Over the past few years, attainment in Key Stage 2 has been above average in English and mathematics.
- The progress that pupils make, particularly in mathematics, improved greatly last year so that the school was placed in the top quarter of all schools nationally for pupils' progress.
- Children enter Reception with varying skills that broadly match those typical for their age. They make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress across the school.
- Teaching over time is good and improving, particularly in reading.
- The school is an inclusive and happy community where pupils and staff interact well and where strong partnerships with other schools enhance pupils' learning successfully.
- The international curriculum at the school engages pupils exceptionally well and this motivates them to achieve well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, and this helps them to learn effectively.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of educational visits and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The governing body's strong commitment to the school has ensured that previous gaps in learning for pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding and those with special educational needs are closing quickly.
- Senior and middle leaders have worked assiduously to address the dip in Key Stage 1 attainment last year so that pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 is now average and improving.
- Strong support from the local authority has helped the quality of the checks the school carries out on its effectiveness to improve. As a result, leaders have focused relentlessly on key priorities and improved the school's overall effectiveness.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently strong across all years and subjects, as the best practice has not been shared and teachers have not had as much relevant training as possible.
- Teachers do not always use long-term targets to help guide pupils towards their next level
- Teachers do not always provide work that fully challenges pupils, especially the more able.

of attainment.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 21 lessons and part-lessons over the two-day inspection in all of the school’s classes and in some additional support classes. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with parents and carers. They also took account of 52 responses to the Parent View online survey, and 23 questionnaire responses from staff.
- They looked at pupils’ work in lessons, and separately with the headteacher. Inspectors heard pupils reading, and observed them in class and around the school.
- A wide range of school documentation was also considered. This included information relating to the attainment and progress of pupils, the management of staff performance, records of lesson observations, the school’s website, the school’s raising attainment plans, its self-evaluation, local authority reports, behaviour records, and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Najoud Ensaff, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Littlejohn

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Downsway is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been a number of changes in teaching staff since the last inspection.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported through school action, is below the national average but the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs has risen since the last inspection and is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through government funding for the pupil premium (those eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or with a parent in the armed services) is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teaching is consistently strong across key stages and subjects, so that achievement, particularly for more able pupils, rises
 - teachers always use long-term targets to help guide pupils towards their next level of attainment.
- Raise leadership and management to outstanding by:
 - sharing the best practice in Key Stage 2 between teachers to raise the quality of teaching and providing specific, focused training for teachers, linked to their performance targets
 - strengthening communication with parents and carers so it is more regular and timely.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a wide range of skills and knowledge that match those typical for children of their age. A number enter with weaker skills in writing and stronger skills in mathematics. They leave Key Stage 1 with attainment that is broadly average in writing and mathematics, and above average in reading.
- Pupils make better progress across Key Stage 2 than the rest of the school because the quality of teaching here is higher and there have been fewer changes to staff in this key stage. When pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- The attainment of pupils in Key Stage 2 rose to well above average in 2012 and the progress they made in mathematics was outstanding. The progress that girls made in 2011 was also outstanding.
- Although in 2012 pupils' performance in the Key Stage 1 phonics (linking sounds and letters) screening check was not as good as that found in other schools nationally, current school data indicate that this year's Year 1 pupils are on course to perform much better than average. Standards of reading in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have remained above average for some time.
- In lessons, pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress, especially when they are clear about their long-term targets and how to move onto the next level of learning or when they are given interesting challenges to solve.
- Gaps in learning and progress between different groups are closing quickly so that all groups of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding now make similar progress to their peers in English and mathematics. Although these pupils' average point scores show that their attainment is not as high as that of other pupils in the school, it is higher than for similar pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, but lower in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers, as a result of focused support from teaching assistants, and high quality additional lessons outside of class. Their gains in attainment are better than those found nationally.
- More able pupils at the school generally make good progress, and a number of pupils in Year 6 gained the highest levels in the end of Key Stage 2 tests in mathematics in 2012. However, more able pupils did not do as well in writing, and occasionally, in lessons, when pupils are not given work that demands a lot of them, the pace of their learning slows.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection so that it is now typically good over time. Teachers have positive working relationships with pupils.
- Teachers make good use of additional adults in lessons to support pupils. They provide pupils with good opportunities to share their learning in pairs and groups, and the better teaching adapts to suit pupils' needs. In the best lessons, teachers build on pupils' prior learning very effectively and give pupils the tools to take ownership of their learning.
- Teachers make good use of the International Primary Curriculum to stimulate pupils' imaginations and motivate them to achieve well. During the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were very effectively engaged in a science lesson when the topic of 'Black Gold' stimulated their interests in current affairs and the impact of oil on the environment. As a result, they made good progress in science and their moral development was well promoted.
- The best teaching interests pupils, and supports and challenges them. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils of different abilities were provided with work at an appropriate level and more able pupils were challenged to consider whether all numbers could be expressed as a product of their prime factors. This stimulated much discussion and investigation work which

developed pupils' mathematical and higher level thinking skills very well.

- While many teachers consider the diverse range of needs that pupils have, a few do not do this consistently so that occasionally tasks are not set at the right level for all pupils. This means that progress, particularly for more able pupils and for some pupils in Key Stage 1, is not always as rapid as possible.
- At other times, the focus of activities is not as clear as it could be and the interaction between adults and children is less strong, so children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not always well guided and therefore their progress slows.
- The school has recently introduced target books but not all teachers are using these effectively to guide pupils towards the next stage of learning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, providing pupils with praise and a comment that guides them towards the next steps in learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons. They work hard and focus effectively and this makes a strong contribution to their good progress and achievement. Comments by the vast majority of pupils and all parents and carers, as well as school records of behaviour, indicate that this good behaviour is usual for pupils at the school.
- Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils are mature, courteous and respectful to adults and to each other, sharing positive working relationships. They are positive ambassadors for the school.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils are not yet taking ownership of their learning and, in lessons where teaching is weaker, their attention wavers.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school and that they know how to keep themselves safe. They understand about different forms of bullying such as racist, physical and verbal bullying and they report that this is rare.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance so that it is now above average for all pupils.
- While some parents and carers who responded to the Parent View Survey indicated that they did not know how effectively the school deals with bullying and a very small number of pupils said that individual instances of bullying are not always dealt with well, the large majority of pupils and all parents and carers spoken to stated very clearly that bullying is rare and it is effectively dealt with by the school. The school's attention has been drawn to these very few instances of inconsistency and appropriate action is being taken to address these.
- Almost all parents and carers believe that their children are well looked after and individually commented positively about the way the school oversees their children's welfare.

The leadership and management are good

- The governing body and senior leaders are ambitious for the school. Together they have raised the school's performance to 'good'. Pupils' achievement has improved so that it is now good and the pupils' progress in 2012 placed it in the top quarter of schools.
- Recent support from the local authority has ensured that the school's self-evaluation and checks on its effectiveness have also improved and this has enhanced the quality of feedback that teachers receive. Teachers from a partnership secondary school have worked with the school in supporting its work on numeracy and this had particularly strong impact on pupils' attainment in mathematics in 2012.
- The school's improved systems for checking pupils' progress have enabled senior leaders and teachers to monitor pupils' attainment and progress more closely and accurately. As a result, the school has focused on the right priorities, provided additional support to pupils and closed gaps in their learning.
- Senior leaders have developed a very detailed action plan linked to pupils' attainment and progress and this has helped them to focus closely on the right areas. They make regular checks on the quality of teaching and marking as well as the planning of learning. They have eliminated all inadequate teaching and raised the quality of teaching to 'good'. This is as a result of the

useful feedback provided to staff, and the challenging targets set for them.

- These targets have been used well to inform future actions at the school but the training provided to teachers is not always targeted specifically towards enabling teachers to achieve their performance targets.
- Senior leaders have ensured that gaps in the learning and attainment of groups of pupils are closing. For example, additional classes and one-to-one support have boosted pupils' learning, and the school has re-evaluated the reading support offered to pupils in order to make it as effective as possible. Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding now make similar progress to their peers because of effective use of funding to provide well-planned support.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social skills very effectively through an imaginative curriculum, philosophy for children lessons, regular extra-curricular activities and memorable educational visits. The highly inclusive nature of the school enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to participate fully in the curriculum.
- Most parents are positive about their experiences with the school but a notable minority expressed some dissatisfaction over the level of communication from the school. The inspection team found that there are a number of effective ways in which the school communicates with parents but that some of these are not always as regular or timely as possible.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body both supports and asks searching questions of the school. Governors have a strong understanding of the school's work, and an improving understanding about the quality of teaching in the school. They discuss in detail pupils' attainment and how well they are making progress. The governing body considers how well the school is doing in comparison to others in the country and sets challenging targets for the school's future performance. It effectively oversees how well teachers are doing, ensuring that pay and promotion for staff are closely linked to the good achievement of their pupils. It ensures that school finances are spent appropriately, ensuring that, for example, pupil premium funding makes a positive difference to these pupils. The governing body ensures that child protection policies and safeguarding meet requirements and that staff and pupils work in a safe environment.

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

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| Unique reference number | 109896 |
| Local authority | West Berkshire |
| Inspection number | 405262 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 209 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Lorraine Doyle |
| Headteacher | Sue Cantwell |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10–11 March 2011 |
| Telephone number | 0118 9421362 |
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