

St Ebbe's Church of England Aided Primary School

Whitehouse Road, Oxford, OX1 4NA

Inspection dates 12–13 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires Improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too variable between subjects and year groups. Teachers do not always use assessment information effectively to tailor lessons that meet pupils' needs, and do not adapt their lessons promptly if work is too easy or too difficult.
- The impact of work to improve teaching is not maximised because there are few first-hand observations of teaching in lessons.
- School leaders do not make robust checks of pupils' progress as they move from year to year, and as a result their evaluations are not wholly accurate.
- The impact of governors on school improvement is limited.
- There is too much variation in pupils' achievement right across the school. Consequently, while significant numbers of pupils do very well, some are lagging behind.
- The gap between the achievement of those eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils is wider than found nationally.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics, particularly for the more-able pupils, is slowed by the use of too many worksheets.
- Pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 1 are lower than expected given pupils' starting points because the teaching of the links between letters and sounds and guided reading sessions are not having sufficient impact on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are happy at school; they feel safe and behave well.
- There are some innovative teaching methods that deepen pupils' understanding.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress due to tremendous opportunities to develop their imagination and independence.
- School leaders have ensured that teaching is beginning to improve and that pupils know more about their learning. As a result, writing is well taught and pupils' progress is accelerating particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- The school's curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to develop their creative skills, such as learning to play musical instruments.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 26 lessons, 15 of which were joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. In addition the inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons, some in partnership with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, seven governors, a local authority representative and school staff including leaders in charge of subjects. In addition some pupils were heard reading to inspectors.
- The inspectors took account of the 55 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and spoke to some parents before school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding records.

Inspection team

Liz Kounnou, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional Inspector

Lucy Maughan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than average and has 11 classes.
- Around a third of the children start school in January rather than in September because they attend a popular local nursery until they reach statutory school age.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who have a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage is higher than average, and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. This group has very varied needs or disabilities.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher joined the school at the start of the last academic year; there have been several changes to staffing and leadership posts this year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - making sure that teachers use the information they gain from assessing pupils' achievements to tailor lessons more precisely to meet the needs of all pupils
 - making sure that teachers make better checks on learning within lessons so that activities are adapted promptly when pupils find work too easy or too difficult
 - reducing the use of worksheets in mathematics and providing more challenging work for the most able
 - reducing the amount of time that teachers spend talking to pupils at the start of lessons
 - making sure that guided reading sessions in Key Stage 1 include sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop reading skills, and the teaching of the links between letters and sounds is always of a good quality.
- Improve the impact of school leaders on raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching by:
 - checking regularly to establish how much progress all groups make in each year group
 - drawing on the best practice in teaching across the school to even out the wide variation in the quality of teaching, so that teaching is consistently good or better in all subjects and all classes
 - undertaking more first-hand monitoring of teaching.
 - making sure the pupil premium has sufficient impact on the achievement of those pupils who are eligible for this additional support.
- Improve the impact of governors on school improvement by:
 - making sure that governors increase their skills in interpreting national performance data, in particular that which compares pupils' progress with other schools
 - ensuring they make robust checks to make sure that the pupil premium is having a positive impact on the pupils it is designed to support

- providing governors with better information about the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement varies widely across the school between subjects, classes and for different groups of pupils. Pupils' progress has not been consistently good over time. Standards are broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school and are improving to some extent. Pupils typically reach higher standards in English than they do in mathematics. In both key stages some pupils do extremely well, while the progress of others falters.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are not doing as well as others. In 2012, this group were more than a year behind their peers in English, and about a year and a half behind in mathematics. Some are making more rapid progress this year.
- Children start school with attainment that is broadly in line with national expectations for their age. They do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the time they move into Year 1, the majority reach levels that are above average.
- In Key Stage 1 although pupils' attainment is above average overall, their achievement is variable. Attainment in reading is rising steadily. Although the teaching of reading is improving strategies are not always fully effective in Years 1 and 2. Progress accelerates for the majority in Years 5 and 6, where pupils do particularly well in developing reading skills.
- Pupils do not always have a secure grasp of how to link letters and sounds (phonics); their achievement is lower than expected for their age in Year 1. Significant changes to teaching phonics skills this year have yet to have a consistently good impact. This limits the development of early reading and writing skills particularly for the lowest attaining pupils.
- Pupils make rapid progress in writing. Handwriting skills are taught well so that most pupils write with a neat, joined script. Pupils enjoy writing about their rich experiences and learn how to structure their writing to good effect.
- Pupils' often work cooperatively to solve mathematical puzzles so that they are confident in explaining their calculations. Nonetheless, achievement in mathematics is variable. Pupils' misconceptions are not always addressed and a tendency to use low-level worksheets for recording mathematics hampers pupils' ability to work things out for themselves, and on occasions limits the progress of the most able mathematicians.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make variable progress. Pupils receiving tailored support in small groups tend to do well because many of the teaching assistants are well trained and provide patient and clear guidance for them. Some work undertaken in classes is too challenging for this group so that their progress slows.
- The achievement of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage varies. Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve broadly average standards in English, but do not do quite as well in mathematics. Good attention to developing pupils' communication skills, including broadening their vocabulary, means that most are confident in speaking English.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is considerable variation in the quality of teaching right across the school. This occurs within year groups and between different subjects. Consequently, pupils' progress varies.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage adults make careful assessments of children's achievement and use these effectively to plan their interventions. As a result children are fully engaged in learning for most of the time. Adults regularly work in very small groups to address children's specific needs. Phonics teaching is not always sufficiently fast paced or precisely matched to children's needs.
- Teachers in the other key stages collect a great deal of information about pupils' achievements,

but do not always use this information effectively to ensure that the activities they provide match pupils' developing skills or understanding. Pupils often work at the same task regardless of their ability. This sometimes means that tasks are too easy for the most able and too difficult for those that find learning more difficult. Where teachers provide different activities for ability groups, the tasks are not always set at the right level to develop pupils' skills and understanding to a good level.

- Teachers do not readily adapt their teaching in response to their pupils' grasp of learning. Pupils sometimes persevere with tasks they do not understand, others complete tasks with little effort because the work lacks challenge. Teachers are slow to amend work because they do not monitor how well pupils are doing during each lesson accurately.
- Most teachers make sure that pupils know what they are intended to learn, and set out the small steps needed to succeed. Sometimes pupils suggest what these might be, reinforcing their previous learning. This enables pupils to assess their own learning so that they take more responsibility for their own success. On occasions it is not clear what pupils are expected to learn and steps to success are not designed well so that progress is limited.
- The most effective teaching gets learning off to a cracking start because information is communicated clearly and promptly so that pupils know precisely what they should do. Pupils have plenty of time to think through their ideas and record their work. As a result learning moves on at a very good pace.
- Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is often highly effective because it is tailored precisely to match pupils' needs, and provided by well-trained teaching assistants.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have a lot of fun at school. They are great ambassadors for the school, holding adults in high regard. Pupils report that adults seek and value their opinions. They are proud to belong to the school community. As a result they behave well most of the time, and try very hard to please the teachers. They want to do well.
- Children begin to develop high levels of independence in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they direct their own learning for most of the day. The stimulating learning environment is packed full of challenging activities for children to select. During the inspection some were busily and safely sawing up wood for their Arty Architects project.
- Pupils are interested in the work because they have the chance to be active, to make decisions, and to work with their friends. The topics are well chosen to promote their curiosity. Their interest sometimes wanes when teachers talk for too long so that they have too little time to get down to work. Although they wriggle and fidget at these points they do not usually misbehave.
- Pupils report that behaviour is good most of the time, with some over exuberance. They are adamant that there is no bullying and expressed complete trust that adults would deal with any incidents. They are very knowledgeable about all forms of bullying and how to keep themselves safe. They know that it is unacceptable to call people names of any kind, and are fully aware of the dangers of bullying associated with technology.
- A few parents raise concerns about behaviour or bullying over time. School leaders keep meticulous records of any incidents that are reported, and take prompt action.
- Pupils regularly work cooperatively and often explain their ideas so that they are particularly confident when speaking to the whole class. There are innumerable opportunities for pupils to work in teams or with partners.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are hampered in their drive to improve teaching

because there is not a robust system to check how much progress all groups make from year to year, and how this compares with national expectations or other milestones. A focus on the attainment of individuals, rather than the progress of groups, means that not all school evaluations made by leaders are fully reliable. An over emphasis on the high attainment of many pupils has masked the picture of variable progress overall.

- School leaders check the quality of pupils' work in their books and check to see what levels they are reaching. Meetings are held with teachers to discuss pupils' achievement each term. However, there is not enough direct monitoring of teaching in classrooms, so that school evaluation of teaching is not always fully informed.
- The management of teachers' performance is efficient and timely each year. However, over time the targets for increasing pupils' progress have not been set at a high enough level to secure good progress for all groups across the school particularly for those eligible to be supported using the pupil premium.
- The impact of school leaders' strongly voiced aim to provide equality of opportunity for the diverse groups within the school is lessened because the school does not do enough to check the progress of different groups of pupils. Nonetheless, the school is a harmonious community where no discrimination of any kind is tolerated by pupils or adults.
- While the curriculum is well designed to promote enjoyment and interest it is not sufficiently precise to promote good progress for all groups. For example the systems for teaching reading are not fully effective. Small group support for reading is well matched to pupils' needs; however, guided reading sessions are not having enough impact because they do not ensure that all pupils in the class effectively practise their reading skills.
- The school development plan identifies the right priorities. Participation in the Oxford Reading Campaign is improving reading skills in Years 2 and 3. There are clear plans to improve teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics.
- The curriculum is enriched with a wealth of cultural opportunities such as working with artists-in-residence, specialist musicians and specialist language teachers, or in 'forest school'. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments. Regular off-site visits add considerably to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. These aspects of learning have a high priority.
- School leaders have appointed staff 'champions' to promote the achievement of specific groups of pupils, for example those eligible for the pupil premium or to develop reading across the school. These recent appointments are already beginning to have a significant impact on improving standards.
- The local authority has provided light touch support for this school since the last inspection, and had not identified that national data indicated the school was at risk of declining in its effectiveness, so that very little support was provided for the new headteacher.
- Safeguarding procedures are managed well so that the school meets all statutory requirements and keeps rigorous up-to-date records.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear knowledge of the attainment of various groups; however, its effectiveness in holding the school to account is impeded by less understanding about how much progress pupils make, especially when compared to other schools. This means governors' detailed work to track the progress of those eligible for the pupil premium, which has included anonymous case studies, has not resulted in a reliable overview of the impact of these funds. Governors report exactly how the funds were spent, and the benefits secured for vulnerable pupils, but are less clear about how this narrowed the attainment gap. They rely on school leaders to report accurately on the quality of teaching, but currently this information is not fully accurate. Performance management targets for teaching staff are routinely set and evaluated; salary awards are clearly linked to this process. Nonetheless, governors take part in regular training sessions to increase their skills. This is most evident in their diligent overview of safeguarding procedures.

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	123212
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	403520

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Fiona Whitehouse
Headteacher	Mrs Susie Bagnall
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 January 2008
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