

The Hawthorns Primary School

Northway, Woosehill, Wokingham, RG413PQ

Inspection dates 25–26 April 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is well-above average and has been for several years.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- In 2011, boys made outstanding progress across Key Stage 2 in English, as did more-able pupils.
- Teachers create a positive climate for learning with lessons that are interesting and where effective questioning helps pupils to make good progress.
- Since the last inspection, pupils have become more aware of their individual targets and have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their attainment.
- Effective support from additional adults helps to guide pupils well.
- The school is a happy, friendly community where pupils and staff interact well and where pupils' behaviour and safety are outstanding.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills especially well through a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, and opportunities to contribute positively to the community.
- Additional training for the governing body has meant that it gives effective support to the school, and holds senior leaders to account well.
- Senior leaders and governors have worked successfully to address the dip in progress in reading for Year 6 pupils in 2012. Pupils make good progress in reading across almost all year groups and standards of reading in both Key Stages 1 and 2 are above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- When marking pupils' books, teachers do not always give pupils clear enough next steps in learning, or time to respond to advice.
- Teaching in Reception classes, particularly during child initiated activities, is not always sufficiently structured for adults to make a significant impact on children's learning.
- Leaders and managers do not use assessment information effectively to increase the progress of different groups of pupils, especially a very small number who have special educational needs or are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Some of the targets in the school's action plans are not always easy for leaders to measure.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 24 lessons over the two-day inspection in all of the school's classes. Some of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, leaders and managers, 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 81 responses to the Parent View online survey, and 52 questionnaire responses from staff.
- They looked at pupils' work in lessons and also scrutinised pupils' books with the senior leaders. Inspectors heard pupils reading and observed them in class and around the school.
- A wide range of school documentation was considered, including: information relating to the attainment and progress of pupils and groups of pupils; the performance management of staff; samples of lesson observations; the school's website; the school's action plans; minutes from governing body meetings; the school's self-evaluation; behaviour records; and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Najoud Ensaff, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| David Beddard | Additional Inspector |
| Akwai Gill | Additional Inspector |
| David Westall | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The Hawthorns Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. It benefits from extensive playing fields, is oversubscribed and the number of pupils has increased since the last inspection.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2012. The school had an interim headteacher for six months prior to her arrival and the deputy headteacher has been at the school since January 2011. There have been a number of changes to the governing body, as well as teaching staff, since the last inspection.
- The large majority of pupils are White British, with other pupils coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is well-below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There are very few pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or with a parent or carer in the armed services).
- 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 making sure that:
 - teachers always give pupils precise advice when marking their work about their next steps in learning, and allow them time to respond to this
 - there is enough structure, particularly during child-initiated activities, in lessons in the Reception classes for adult intervention to be effective so that children are always engaged in purposeful learning activity.
- Raise leadership and management to outstanding by making sure that:
 - targets in school action plans related to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are always specific and easy to measure
 - leaders and managers use assessment information consistently well to increase the rates of progress of different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The trend over recent years has been for attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 to be well above average.
- Children come from a range of pre-school settings and enter Reception classes with a wide range of skills. The majority enter with levels of skills which are above those expected for their age.
- Progress in the Reception classes is not as good as in the rest of the school because adults are missing opportunities to intervene to engage children in purposeful learning.
- In 2011, boys in Year 6 made outstanding progress across Key Stage 2 in English and the school's assessment information indicates that the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language often make outstanding progress, as a result of focused work by the school in conjunction with the local authority.
- Although in 2012 a very small number of pupils did not make expected progress in reading, current progress information indicates that the proportions making expected and better than expected progress across the school in both English and mathematics are good.
- Pupils' performance in the Key Stage 1 phonics (linking sounds and letters) screening check in 2012 was broadly in line with other schools nationally. Current information indicates that pupils in Year 1 have a much better level of phonics knowledge now. The standard of reading in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good.
- The very few pupils who have special educational needs do not always do as well as similar groups nationally, and current school progress information indicates that a very small number of pupils from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds have not made as much progress as others nationally. This is because the assessment information is not used well enough to track their progress and set challenging targets for them.
- The funding for the very few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is used appropriately to provide, for example, specialist staff for classes and one-to-one support to boost their learning. Gaps in attainment between these pupils and their peers are closing in both English and mathematics. Although occasionally progress is behind that of their peers by one or two terms, by the time they reach Year 6 they make similar or better progress.
- More-able pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress, particularly in writing. This is because the school has focused closely on this group and tracked their progress carefully, so that in lessons, teachers use effective questioning to challenge these pupils in their learning. In 2011, more-able pupils made outstanding progress in English.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is a positive climate for learning at the school. This, and productive working relationships between pupils and teachers, contributes positively to pupils' achievement.
- Good teaching over time means that pupils make good progress across the school. Pupils behave exceptionally well in almost all lessons. They have outstanding attitudes to learning and as a result, they achieve well.
- Teachers provide pupils with effective opportunities to work in pairs or groups, sharing their learning and developing their communication skills. Where teaching is best, the quality of support offered by teachers is very strong. They question pupils precisely and deepen their understanding exceptionally well, moving their learning on.
- Progress in most lessons is good with teachers giving pupils interesting activities that build on their learning well. Occasionally, where teachers do not consider individual pupils' needs carefully enough, they make less progress.
- The best teaching uses assessment information extremely well to cater for pupils' individual needs and makes learning meaningful. For example, in an exceptionally well-planned

mathematics lesson in Year 5, the teacher had marked pupils' work from a previous lesson very closely and provided them with very clear guidance about how to challenge themselves to reach the next level. Pupils then generated their own targets for success and used these to measure how well they had applied their knowledge of percentages, making outstanding progress.

- In a history lesson in Year 6, pupils made good progress as a result of work that was well matched to the range of their abilities. Lower-ability pupils were given additional support through well-considered questions on worksheets while more-able pupils were challenged to compare an Aztec timeline with the history of Wokingham.
- Teachers promote pupils' literacy skills well across different subjects, including information and communication technology and mathematics. Teachers make good use of the outdoor learning environment with, for instance, pupils having opportunities to use the 'storytelling chair' to tell stories and develop their own writing skills.
- Occasionally the purpose of lessons is not always clear, particularly in Reception classes. Here the involvement of adults is not prompt enough or of sufficient quality to move children's learning on rapidly. As a result, children do not make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, often giving pupils praise and a comment. However, their advice is not always precise enough to show pupils the next steps in their learning, and pupils are not typically given the opportunity to respond to teachers' written comments.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons. They have outstanding attitudes to learning. One comment from a pupil sums up how almost all pupils feel: 'We love learning.'
- School records of behaviour and responses by pupils and parents and carers indicate that this exemplary behaviour is usual for pupils.
- Behaviour around the school is impeccable. Pupils are extremely positive about the school and rightly proud of it. They are outgoing, welcoming, polite and respectful to adults and to each other.
- Pupils report that they feel very safe at school and that they know how to keep themselves safe. They understand about different forms of bullying such as physical, verbal and racist bullying. Although a small minority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View indicated that bullying is not always effectively dealt with, all pupils and parents and carers spoken to during the inspection reported that any rare instances of bullying are well dealt with and that children feel safe at the school.
- Pupils contribute strongly to the local and wider community. They act as peer mediators and playground friends in school, visit a local senior citizens home and regularly raise money for charities in the United Kingdom and a partner school in Sri Lanka.
- Attendance for almost all pupils is high. The school has worked hard to improve the attendance of the very few pupils who attend less regularly, with good impact.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to the online Parent View survey believe that their children are well looked after and are happy at the school.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have high expectations for the school's performance. They have worked well with other schools and have been successful in improving the way that teachers both challenge more-able pupils and set individual targets for pupils. All pupils spoken to during the inspection knew what their long-term targets were.
- Light-touch support from the local authority has helped the school to improve the governing body's understanding of attainment and progress information.
- Senior leaders make regular and close checks on the quality of teaching and marking as well as the planning of learning. They provide useful feedback to staff, setting them clear targets. This,

combined with effective training linked to identified areas for development, has helped to improve individual teachers' practice. Pay progression is securely linked to performance.

- Leaders hold formal meetings with teachers to review pupils' progress, and this is helping them to close gaps in the learning and attainment of the vast majority of pupils.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to set and review targets to speed up learning for all groups of pupils. Consequently, a very small number of pupils who have special educational needs and a very small number from minority ethnic backgrounds currently make less progress than they should.
- The school is a cohesive community with leaders fostering good relations between pupils and promoting equal opportunities. While there are differences in the achievement of a very small number of pupils and their peers, discrimination of any kind is not tolerated at the school.
- Subjects are well planned and organised with an enormously wide range of extra-curricular clubs, educational visits and visiting speakers to the school, all of which enhance pupils' experience and enjoyment of subjects greatly.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social skills extremely well through a range of music and art activities, philosophy-for-children lessons, regular participation in the local arts festival and whole-school themed weeks.
- While school action plans are focused on the right priorities and are helping the school to move forward, targets related to the quality of teaching and achievement are not specific enough. This means that progress towards these targets is more difficult to measure.
- The school engages well with parents and carers offering information evenings, regular newsletters and a number of opportunities to talk to staff across the academic year.

A few parents who responded to the online Parent View survey expressed some dissatisfaction about homework. The inspection team found that there is a clear homework policy in place, with teachers providing some good examples of homework to pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body makes good use of individual members' expertise to both support and ask searching questions of the school. Governors have a good understanding of the school's work, including the quality of teaching. Increasingly, they discuss how well the school is doing in comparison to others in the country, and challenge the school, for example, about the achievement of particular pupils and whether enough is being demanded of more-able pupils. The governing body has a clear oversight of how well teachers are doing, making sure that pay and salary progression for staff are closely linked to the good achievement of their pupils. It knows what is being done to tackle any underperformance. It oversees the school's finances well, so that, for example, pupils have good opportunities to participate in worthwhile educational visits that enhance their learning. The governing body sees that child protection policies and safeguarding meet requirements and that staff and pupils work in a safe environment.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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 | 109921 |
| Local authority | Wokingham |
| Inspection number | 412467 |

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 | 444 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Chris Shaw |
| Headteacher | Pat Kerton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12–13 January 2010 |
| Telephone number | 0118 9791676 |
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