

Barley Hill Primary School

Ludsdon Grove, Thame, Oxfordshire, OX9 3DH

Inspection dates 2–3 May 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. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching has not been consistently good enough over time to enable pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The progress that pupils are making currently from Year 1 to Year 6 in writing and mathematics is uneven and requires improvement.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing, or to use the mathematics they are learning to solve problems.
- In some lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and the work is not challenging enough, particularly for more able pupils.
- Teachers' questioning too often requires short answers from pupils, rather than helping them think through and develop the ideas they are learning about.
- The evaluation of teaching is not rigorous enough because leaders do not examine closely enough its impact on pupil progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good overall. As a result, children make good progress in Reception classes.
- Teaching and progress is improving from Years 1 to 6.
- Pupils have made good progress in reading by the end of Year 6.
- The behaviour of pupils is good and they feel safe. They are all keen to learn.
- School leaders at all levels, including governors, are ambitious for, and committed to, the school's success and work well together.
- The headteacher, since her appointment, has helped to bring about significant and positive changes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons. This included four joint observations with the senior leaders and observations of pupils receiving additional support. In addition, the inspection team examined pupils' work in their books and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, governors, senior and middle leaders and an externally appointed consultant. A telephone conversation was conducted with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 125 parental responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and the 54 staff questionnaires returned to the inspection team.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including policies and improvement plans and documentation relating to staff development, pupil achievement, teaching, the curriculum, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Mehar Brar, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Lawson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Barley Hill Primary School is a well above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of girls is above the national average but variable across year groups.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding provided for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is below average. In this school, this applies to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most pupils in the school are of White British heritage. The rest of the pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below average, and the proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The governing body manages a breakfast and after-school club
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupil attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher was appointed in January 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and raises the rate of pupil progress in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to produce written work of greater length
 - providing opportunities for all pupils to solve problems in mathematics so that they can apply the mathematics that they are learning
 - ensuring that the pace of learning is brisk in all lessons
 - providing pupils, particularly more able pupils, with appropriately challenging work
 - using questioning in lessons to deepen and extend pupils' understanding of the key ideas being taught.
- Ensure leaders and managers, including governors, have a greater impact on school improvement by:
 - judging the quality of teaching by more rigorously checking its impact on pupil progress

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 has been too slow over time. The school's tracking system, inspectors' observations of teaching and a review of pupils' work in their books show that although progress has improved in reading, it is still variable across the year groups in writing and mathematics. As a result, by the end of Year 6, attainment in writing and mathematics is still in line with the national average.
- Children enter Reception with skills and abilities in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress by the end of Reception.
- An improved focus on disabled pupils and those with special educational needs means that they are now making progress in line with their peers. Teachers and support staff work well together to meet these pupils' needs through support in class and small group teaching.
- Pupils in Year 6 in 2012 who received support funded by the pupil premium grant attained at a level that was four terms behind in English, and two terms behind in mathematics when compared to the rest of the school. This gap is now only half a term overall for both English and mathematics because the school has a more established system of tracking the progress made by individual pupils and providing them with the support they need.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who have English as an additional language make similar progress compared to other pupils in the school. There is no difference in the progress made by boys and girls and by pupils who join the school at other than the usual times.
- Progress in writing and mathematics is improving, but standards overall are still not above those seen nationally because pupils do not have enough opportunity to write at length or to apply their learning about mathematics to solve problems.
- The school is committed to providing every pupil in the school with an equal opportunity to achieve at the highest level possible. The rates of pupils' progress are improving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, from Years 1 to 6 it still requires improvement because in too many lessons teachers do not help pupils learn fast enough by maintaining a brisk pace to lessons, or by ensuring pupils' learning is deep and secure by using questioning and discussion to help them develop their ideas.
- Too many pupils, particularly higher ability pupils, are not challenged enough by what they are being taught.
- Teaching is stronger in Reception due to the high expectations and effective teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Good planning, clear assessment, the use of storytelling and outdoor learning help develop a variety of approaches to learning. Children are active and thoughtful while building upon their own interests. One child for example told the inspection team, 'I am digging a hole to put in this seed, then I'll need to water it. It might grow.'
- In Years 1 to 6, teaching is more variable. Almost all classrooms have a positive climate for learning, and relationships between teachers and pupils are mostly good. Most pupils enjoy learning, and are eager to learn. When teaching is good, pupils understand what they have been asked to do and teachers and support staff help to deepen and extend their learning through the use of questions, and by moving them on to more difficult work.
- The teaching of reading is effective. As soon as children join the Reception classes, they learn about the sounds that letters make, and how to join these sounds together. They also develop their writing skills, and gain confidence with numbers. As pupils pass through the school, they learn to enjoy reading. The school is continuing to improve the choice of books available, so that pupils can gain an understanding of different types of stories and how characters develop.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. The inspection team agree with the views of staff, the pupils themselves and the vast majority of parents that pupils feel safe in school, and are courteous and well behaved in lessons and around the school. Pupils are keen to learn and have positive attitudes to their learning.
- On a few occasions, the school has been slow to resolve behaviour incidents, but the school continues to work towards making behaviour and safety outstanding by using pupil and parent views gained through its own surveys to revise policies and provide more opportunities for pupils to hold positions of responsibility so that their views are increasingly used to help improve the school.
- Due to the strong efforts of the school, attendance by all groups of pupils is now securely average. Staff work hard to help pupils settle when they join the school. Pupils make good friendships and enjoy learning from the clubs, visits and activities the school provides.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. They have a clear understanding of all forms of bullying, including racism and cyber-bullying, and know what to do if they encounter it.
- Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe by learning about safety on the road, being safe around people they do not know and using the internet safely.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leaders and managers have not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching. As a result, rates of progress have not been good for some time. Rates of progress are now improving but still inconsistent across year groups and subjects.
- When leaders look at pupils' books and observe lessons, they are not rigorous enough in checking how well teaching is helping pupils make better progress.
- The headteacher has worked with the governors to develop a system to record the progress made by pupils, and then to meet with teachers to help them identify those pupils who are capable of better progress or are underachieving. She has also developed an ambitious and active leadership team across the school. These developments are helping to improve the school, but have not yet improved teaching enough to secure consistently good progress across Years 1 to 6.
- Most parents understand how the school is changing and developing, and value these improvements. A few parents do not feel that they know enough about how the school claims to be improving and they lack confidence in the work of the school.
- The curriculum in the school is broad and balanced. It includes visits to local places of interest, events such as competitions and concerts, and clubs such as for karate and chess. The curriculum is having a good impact on developing reading skills and pupils' broader personal development, but the impact on improving writing skills and mathematics requires improvement.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning contribute to the good behaviour seen by the inspection team and develop pupils into confident young citizens who want to help those less fortunate than themselves and are proud of their school. Through links with other schools and countries, pupils are able to understand how life in their own community differs from people's lives in other communities.
- The local authority has provided effective support to develop accurate assessments of pupils' work and has undertaken reviews of safeguarding and health and safety. The school also benefits from an independent critical consultant who helps school leaders evaluate how well the school is improving.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are a committed and active team and share the ambition of leaders across the school. They develop their skills and knowledge through training specifically for governors along with their own reading about issues relevant to the school. Through first-hand visits to the school, and comprehensive and clear reports from the headteacher, they have gained a

clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and are increasingly able to hold school leaders to account for the progress made by pupils in relation to pupils nationally. They are aware of the support provided for pupils receiving the pupil premium and the impact of this support. Governors receive reports relating to the performance management of teachers and receive recommendations from the headteacher relating to movement up the pay scales.

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	123034
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	413113

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	561
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Phil Evans
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Stopforth
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 September 2009
Telephone number	01844 213100
Fax number	01844 260402
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