

Chiltern Primary School

Chiltern Way, Basingstoke, RG22 5BB

Inspection dates 15–16 May 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

- From a very low start, pupils make good progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The rate of pupils' progress has accelerated swiftly in recent years as a result of the successful drive to improve the quality of teaching.
- Teaching is consistently good and at times outstanding. Teachers are skilled in using a range of approaches that engage and excite the pupils to learn successfully. Support staff play a significant role in this.
- The school provides an oasis of calm where adults and children enjoy warm and harmonious relationships.
- Pupils behave well and are keen to learn. A consistent approach to managing behaviour contributes to the purposeful learning environment.
- The acting headteacher has played a pivotal role in sustaining the staff's determination to enable all pupils to do as well as they can.
- The leadership of the school has ensured that rates of progress accelerate and pupils' behaviour improves.
- Governors know the school and its community well and provide good challenge and strong support for further improving the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding to enable pupils' outstanding achievement. The quality of feedback to pupils is inconsistent. Marking does not always include precise guidance about how they can improve their work, particularly in writing.
- Pupils' instant recall of basic number facts is patchy. This means they sometimes lack confidence in solving mathematical problems. Pupils often use long-winded methods of calculating rather than quicker methods.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, five of which were joint observations with the acting headteacher. They listened to pupils read and discussed their reading habits and preferences with them.
- Inspectors discussed various aspects of the school with pupils and looked at a range of their work. They took account of the school’s data on pupils’ attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- During the inspection, inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the on-line Parent View survey. They had informal discussions with parents and took account of the 16 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, teachers’ plans, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records of the school leaders’ monitoring of lessons.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bryan Meyer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is broadly average in size. Most pupils are White British, with around 10% from a range of minority ethnic groups. A below average proportion of all pupils speak English as an additional language
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium, is well above average. (The pupil premium provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, children of parents serving in the armed forces and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. These needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication problems or behavioural difficulties.
- A larger proportion of pupils than average do not begin their schooling at this primary school but join at a later date or leave before the conclusion of their primary education.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In February, the deputy headteacher took over as acting headteacher and has been supported on a part-time basis by a number of headteachers from other schools. A new headteacher will start in September.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers routinely provide specific guidance about how pupils can improve their work
 - providing time for pupils to respond to teachers' comments on their previous work before setting them new tasks
 - placing more emphasis on pupils' handwriting and neatness.
- Improve pupils' confidence in solving mathematical problems by:
 - placing more emphasis on their instant recall of basic number facts, such as multiplication tables
 - teaching them quicker methods of calculation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the school in Reception with skills, knowledge and understanding well below those expected for their age. Although they respond well to the stimulating teaching and make good progress, by the end of Reception levels of attainment are generally below average.
- A strong emphasis on teaching phonics (the sounds letters make) means pupils make good headway in reading. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check is set to be double that of last year. Pupils' increasing phonics skills have a very positive knock-on effect on their early writing so, by the end of Year 2, their literacy skills are broadly average. However, pupils' handwriting is not always as neat or fluent as it might be.
- Practical work helps pupils in Key Stage 1 gain a sound understanding of basic number facts. However, they are not always able to recall these without recourse to counting on their fingers and this slows their progress when working out, for example, $17+3$ or $4+16$.
- When the current Year 6 pupils started in Year 3, they were the equivalent of almost a year behind pupils nationally in English and mathematics. They are now working at broadly average levels, reflecting the speed with which they have caught up.
- Pupils enjoy reading and many read widely, gaining insights into how authors engage their readers. When discussing her reading with an inspector, one pupil, commentating on Jacqueline Wilson's approach, remarked, 'They are set in real life and most chapters end with a cliff hanger.'
- Pupils increasingly use the vocabulary and sentence structure they come across in their reading to add quality to their own writing. During a lesson on the use of personification, writing as a drop of blood, one pupil wrote, 'Carefully, as the small lonely heart beat rapidly, it quickly pushed me through the pulsating veins.'
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics. They become adept at using various methods, including number lines and grids to multiply and divide. Some of their calculations, however, are a little laborious where shorter methods would be more efficient.
- On average, the attainment of pupils supported by pupil premium funding was around two terms behind their classmates last year. There is still a gap but it is narrowing due to the school's timely actions. Current pupils in this group have made at least the expected progress this year. Those in school through both Years 5 and 6 made more rapid progress than their classmates due to consistently good or better teaching.
- Although pupils who do not spend the majority of their education at the school typically perform less well than other pupils, they learn well and make good progress from their different starting points.
- Due to highly effective support, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress against the specific targets set for them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Children in Reception respond enthusiastically to the stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors. Staff establish warm relationships and take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and move their learning forward.
- Teachers plan lessons imaginatively to ensure that pupils find their learning interesting. They take the different needs of pupils into account when they decide what and how to teach them.
- Teachers ensure pupils know what is expected of different groups during each lesson. They routinely set out three levels of work, allowing pupils, with their guidance, to select the level which will challenge them. This avoids pupils going over old ground unnecessarily and sustains a good pace of learning.
- Most lessons start with something to grab pupils' attention, stimulate their interest and stir a response. For example, after looking at video clips and pictures of the First World War, one pupil in Year 4 was inspired to write, 'Another fearful day, risking our lives to save others. Luckily, their courage boosted my strength.'
- Questioning is used skilfully to help pupils think deeply, share ideas and build strong communication skills. During a highly effective lesson in Year 6, pupils responded maturely to questioning as the teacher deftly drew out their ideas and deepened their understanding of the concept of success.
- Marking in books is regular and positive. It celebrates the achievements of the pupils well. Occasionally, it does not provide enough detail about how to reach a higher standard. Poor handwriting and sloppy presentation are not always picked up. Although teachers' comments often include an additional task, they do not always allow time for pupils to respond to their marking before introducing new work.
- Staff take pains to help newcomers settle in well. They quickly check their levels of attainment and plan tasks that move their learning forward.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to talk about what they are doing and proudly show their work to visitors. They are highly enthusiastic about the work of the school council and eco committee.
- Pupils say that it is rare for their lessons to be disrupted and the vast majority of parents and staff share their positive view of behaviour.
- All staff adhere to the school's guidelines on promoting positive behaviour. Pupils who have particular difficulties in interacting socially or in behaving well are extremely well supported.
- Comprehensive plans for individual pupils highlight their strengths, pinpoint their particular difficulties and include specific support programmes. Child friendly versions of these plans encourage pupils to contribute to, and reflect on, their progress.
- Pupils say they feel safe in the school. They describe their teachers as kind and feel they can approach them if they experience a problem either with their learning or in other areas of life.
- Pupils are taught about a range of potential dangers, in and out of school, and are equipped well by the school to deal with these. They have a clear understanding of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know how to respond to such incidents. They say that bullying in the school is rare and are confident that staff deal with such incidents promptly.
- Attendance has improved since the time of the last inspection, reaching an above average level last year. Attendance rates so far this year are broadly average and the school's recently appointed family liaison officer is in regular contact with the few parents whose children are persistently absent to encourage improvement.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher has not only maintained the school's strengths but has led further improvements. She has used her comprehensive knowledge of the school to promote initiatives that are having a positive impact on raising the quality of teaching and accelerating pupils' progress.
- The local authority has supported the school well following the previous inspection and subsequently when the acting headteacher took over. It negotiated support for the leadership team from interim headteachers. This has proved valuable, although the school is well placed to move forward with only light touch external support.
- Governors and all staff, including subject leaders and those with other responsibilities, share the ambition to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils, to eliminate any discrimination and to promote good relationships within the school and the community. For example, pupil premium funding is used effectively to support pupils who might otherwise be disadvantaged and is enabling them to achieve as well as their classmates.
- Well-established systems help leaders to keep a sharp focus on improving teaching. Staff are extremely positive about the opportunities for training and development. A typical comment was, 'If it wasn't for the support I have had, I wouldn't be half the teacher I have become.'
- The curriculum is designed imaginatively to promote pupils' academic progress and their personal development. Pupils' learning is enhanced through themes that link subjects, promote their independence, and provide opportunities for them to practise and extend their literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Educational trips, inspirational visitors and popular clubs contribute much to pupils' enjoyment of school. Moral development is promoted particularly well. The school's motto, 'Learn together, Grow together, Achieve together' and an emphasis on the United Nations' children's charter underpin the school's approach.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors keep well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their understanding of information on pupils' progress enables them to ask insightful questions. Governors have a secure knowledge of performance management systems and seek assurance that these are used to improve the quality of teaching and to reward good teachers. They keep a close eye on finance, to help ensure value for money, including the effective use of pupil premium funding. A strong emphasis is given to safeguarding pupils and child protection, and procedures fully meet current 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

Unique reference number	109925
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	402616

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	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Becky Teagle
Headteacher	Caroline Williamson
Date of previous school inspection	7–8 October 2009
Telephone number	01256 473791
Fax number	01256 331850
Email address	Admin.office@chiltern-pri.hants.sch.uk

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