

Calcot Infant School and Nursery

Curtis Road, Calcot, Reading, RG31 4XG

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The headteacher's inspirational leadership provides an excellent role model and motivates others to have high aspirations for themselves and the pupils.
- Good leadership of teaching and learning by the senior leadership team together with effective management of teachers' performance have ensured that teaching is at least good, and some is outstanding.
- All groups of pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are very kind and polite and show great care and respect for each other. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and have extremely positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Members of the governing body know the school well because they care about the school and want to become involved.
- The school is held in high regard by parents. All of those who responded to 'Parent View' said that they would recommend the school to another parent.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of teaching which is outstanding is not high enough to ensure all pupils learn exceptionally well.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as rapid as in reading and writing.
- Work is not always hard enough for more able pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- There are too few 'real-life' investigations in mathematics and pupils are not as enthusiastic about the subject as they are about reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons, taught by 10 teachers.
- Seven joint observations of teaching and learning were conducted with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, the local authority, staff and groups of pupils.
- The inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- The inspectors spoke to parents and took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised pupils' workbooks and looked at school policies, including those relating to safeguarding and equality, minutes of governing body meetings and planning documents.
- The inspectors took account of the 13 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Barbara Atcheson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Allan Barfoot

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Calcot Infant School and Nursery is a larger-than-average-sized infant school.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding (known as the pupil premium) is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The headteacher was appointed in 2010 and the deputy headteacher was appointed in 2011.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for its pupils.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is in a hard federation with the junior school, which is on the same site and shares the same headteacher and the same governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - checks on learning during lessons are more accurate so that errors are not repeated
 - the rate at which pupils learn is accelerated so that they all make exceptional progress
 - all teachers' expectations of what more able pupils can do are raised, so that these pupils are suitably challenged.
- Accelerate progress in mathematics to match achievement in reading and writing by:
 - ensuring that all pupils are suitably challenged
 - increasing the number of 'real-life' investigations that generate an excitement and enthusiasm about mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school has had a history of pupils reaching standards which have been significantly above average at the end of Year 2 between 2008 and 2010. However, standards appeared to dip to broadly average in 2011. Information gathered on pupils' learning during the inspection shows this to be an accurate picture of pupils' achievement based on new, more precise checks on learning rather than a drop in standards.
- The school has built on this firm, accurate foundation and standards showed an upward trend in 2012. Standards have continued to rise in line with the school's ambitious targets so that pupils in Year 2 are currently reaching levels which are above those expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- School information, confirmed by inspectors' analysis of pupils' work in books and lesson observations, shows that all pupils make at least good progress. However, the school's successful focus on the development on reading and writing has meant that pupils' progress in these two subjects is more rapid than in mathematics.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with the skills, knowledge and understanding that are just below the levels expected for their age, particularly in speech and language. Their learning is secure because a wealth of interesting, relevant learning activities provides children with opportunities to experiment, practise and perfect newly learned early reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Pupils benefit from the school's consistent approach to learning their letters and sounds (phonics) in small groups where their learning is tailor-made and led by skilful teachers and learning support assistants. As a result, pupils display enjoyment and a willingness to 'have a go' at tricky words when reading.
- Pupils delight in writing about exciting topics such as a fantasy setting. Consistently good teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and joined handwriting has given pupils as young as Year 1 the confidence to write sentences such as, 'The miniature fairy is dancing and the sparkling fountain is blue.'
- Mathematics is often less exciting. For example, although less able pupils find the materials to help them work out problems in a visual way helpful, the progress of more able pupils can sometimes slow when they dutifully plod through a list of 'sums' that are well within their scope.
- Accurate identification and an appropriate range of extra support, in the form of skilled learning support assistants, enable disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make the same good rate of progress as that of other pupils.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium benefit from one-to-one and small-group tuition, which helps them to make good progress in English and mathematics and successfully closes any learning gaps they might have. This enables them to perform as well as others in the school in reading, writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers and learning support assistants know their pupils well and are very enthusiastic. Their good subject knowledge is evident in the way that they question pupils to deepen their understanding and clarify any misunderstandings. They have good relationships with their pupils. This means that pupils want to do their best; they make good progress and achieve well over time.
- Nursery staff are highly skilled at joining in with children's play, bringing delight to children's learning and a confidence to express themselves when acting out well-known stories. Staff are skilled at asking the right questions to prompt children's thinking. For example, adults encouraged a group of children to compare what they were building in the sandpit to the model close by, culminating in an increasingly mature use of language and thinking skills and a very

impressive sand castle.

- In the Reception classes, well-planned activities give children good opportunities to practise reading, writing and mathematics in practical, meaningful ways. For example, a girl gathering sticks for her 'fire' carefully counted 20 sticks, showing pleasure in her new-found confidence in numbers up to 20.
- In a Year 1 lesson on time problems, all pupils made good progress because the work was at the right level for each pupil. They worked industriously throughout the lesson and were fully involved in solving the problems they had been set. However, this is not always the case and for some pupils, especially the more able, work is too easy and their rate of progress drops.
- Teachers are good at reminding pupils about what they need to produce a first-rate piece of work. They will often stop the class and ask them to check over their work for mistakes or things they have left out. In a good Year 2 lesson to write a character description, pupils confidently made their own checks using a 'success ladder'. However, not all checks on pupils' learning are accurate, particularly when teachers do a quick visual check on what pupils have written on their individual whiteboards, and mistakes can be glossed over.
- The skilful contribution made by learning support assistants in class and in smaller support groups makes an important contribution to pupils' good progress, particularly for those pupils who have special educational needs and those eligible for the pupil premium benefit.
- Consistently good marking helps pupils to improve their work. Pupils are used to entering into a dialogue with teachers as they hone and perfect their work. For example, a Year 1 boy knew exactly what he had to change to make the previous piece of work better quality, saying, 'I have to cross out all of these 'ands', put a full stop here and a comma there.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Outstanding opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enable pupils to have a clear set of personal values.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils work and play harmoniously. They show a great maturity in the relationships that they have with adults and with each other, despite their young age. This was exemplified by a group of Year 1 pupils who confidently took it on themselves to organise and enjoy a game of 'I Spy' during a wet playtime.
- Pupils are extremely polite; even Nursery children are keen to hold doors open for others. They are very eager to learn and are confident to undertake independent learning because their teachers have given them the necessary skills and strategies to do this.
- Pupils say bullying is rare. They think school is 'brilliant' and say they feel very safe in school and know that there will always be someone who will listen to them if they have any concerns. They say that they would tell a new pupil that the school 'is a lovely school and you will have a good time'.
- Parents appreciate the benefits of the school's breakfast club and pupils enjoy the companionship and games.
- Parents talking in glowing terms about the school. They recognise what the school strives to achieve and say they are extremely happy with their children's education.
- All of those who responded to 'Parent View' said that they would recommend the school to another parent. They also said that the school dealt effectively with bullying and that their children were happy, felt safe and behaved well.

The leadership and management are good

- Staff and senior leaders are in total agreement that the headteacher provides an outstanding role model of good practice. They respect her as an excellent practitioner in her own right, who has brought enthusiasm and high aspirations into the classroom through the in-house professional development that she has led.

- Although once two separate schools, the infant and junior school now feel that they are very much as one, under the leadership of one headteacher and governing body. This is because great care has been taken to maintain a consistency of practice across both schools. Careful arrangements, planned and overseen by a transition manager, ensure a seamless move from one school to the other so that pupils' education is uninterrupted.
- The strong senior leadership team, who have taken their lead from the headteacher's good example, have made important improvements. This is apparent in the way that learning is now organised in the Nursery, the introduction of a more practical approach to mathematics, and the consistent way in which letters and sound are now taught across the two schools.
- Teaching and learning are improving strongly as a result of effective checks on teaching and learning and a comprehensive programme of modelling, coaching and good-quality professional development, particularly in house. As a result, teaching is consistently good and there is a growing proportion of outstanding teaching within the school.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively. Following an audit against the 'Teachers Standards', school and personal targets are set and the level of support needed to reach those targets is discussed. Reviews of performance tackle weaknesses and recognise and reward improvements in teaching.
- The local authority provided instrumental support when the federation between the two schools began, but since then has provided 'light-touch' support for this school, based on its performance and the good-quality leadership of headteacher.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity. All teachers are held to account and pupils' progress is checked at regular meetings. If any pupil is seen to underperform, extra help is arranged.
- Partnerships with parents are good and parents say that they find the school very approachable. This in turn helps parents to become partners in their children's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body play an active part in the strategic direction of the school. They have an accurate view of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching and how pupils' test results compare nationally and to those of other similar schools. They have a good, first-hand knowledge of the school from their own focused programme of observations and analysis of work, which they share with senior leaders. Helpful local authority training and governors' own observations are helping them to understand where weaknesses in teaching lie and to realise that more work has to be done to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching. They fulfil their responsibility in rewarding teachers' performance only when justified by pupils' achievement. Governors are fully involved with setting targets for the school and hold it to account. Governors ensure that statutory duties such as safeguarding are met and that financial resources are managed well. For example, they know how many pupils are eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium, their levels of attainment and the impact of the extra help provided by the money allocated.

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	109931
Local authority	Berkshire
Inspection number	412656

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Justin Patient
Headteacher	Karen Sawyer
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2009
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