

# St Michael's Easthampstead CofE VA Primary School

Crowthorne Road, Easthampstead, Bracknell, RG12 7EH

**Inspection dates** 12–13 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Teaching over time is good because most activities are carefully planned to meet pupils' needs. Teachers make lessons interesting and engaging and as a result pupils have good attitudes to learning. Effective use of additional adults to support individuals or groups means all pupils make the same good progress.
- Pupils speak very positively about their school, behave well and have a very clear sense of right and wrong. They have a very good understanding of how to stay safe. The vast majority of parents and carers agree. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is high.
- Increasingly rigorous teacher assessment shows that growing proportions of pupils are now making faster progress in all years. Standards are rising. More pupils are reaching the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are confident readers. A more systematic approach to the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make), particularly in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, is driving up achievement in reading and writing.
- Senior and middle leaders have a good understanding of how well the school is doing and what actions to take next to make it better. Governors are very well informed and are prepared to challenge as well as support school leaders.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. In some lessons, pupils are not involved quickly enough in learning well matched to their abilities, or those who show they can do the work are not always moved on quickly to harder things. This can slow their progress.
- The quality of guidance in teachers' marking is variable. Opportunities to act upon the comments or be more involved in assessing their own work are not yet well developed enough to accelerate pupils' progress further.
- Leaders do not always act promptly enough when taking actions and reviewing their impact to accelerate pupils' progress further.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons or part lessons led by both teachers and teaching assistants. They were accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher for approximately half of these.
- The inspectors took account of the 78 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as talking to parents and carers informally during the inspection. They took account of the school's own parental surveys.
- Inspectors observed teaching in a number of short reading, writing and mathematics sessions at the start of the day. They listened to pupils in Years 2 and 3 read individually and met with two different groups of pupils.
- They spoke with five school governors and a representative of the local authority. They also spoke to school staff, including senior and subject leaders, and held a telephone call with a senior leader who was away on the Year 6 residential visit. They observed in all the classes, as well as groups of pupils supported outside the classroom.
- The school's work was observed and inspectors looked at documentation, including policies relating to safeguarding and behaviour, information on pupils' progress, attendance figures, the school's improvement planning and records of checks carried out by leaders on the quality of teaching. They observed playtimes and an assembly, as well as looking at the school's website.
- They looked at work in pupils' books during their classroom observations and with the headteacher and deputy headteacher scrutinised those of pupils from the Year 6 class who were away on a residential visit during the inspection.

## Inspection team

Jacqueline Marshall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Crouch

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from a White British background. Others are from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils receiving the pupil premium is rising. It is currently below average. The pupil premium is extra money given to schools by the government to support pupils in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families. The school currently has no pupils from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and receive support through school action is average. The proportion being supported through school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The current headteacher retires at the end of the summer term and a new headteacher has been appointed to start in September.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress by securing a greater proportion of outstanding teaching throughout the school by making sure teachers:
  - quickly move pupils on to more challenging work in lessons once they have demonstrated their understanding of what is being taught
  - actively engage pupils and involve them in work appropriate to their ability at all times and especially when teachers are talking to the whole class
  - help pupils, particularly the most able, to identify and assess for themselves what they need to do next to improve their work
  - give pupils time to read, understand and act upon marking and guidance provided.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the school's leaders to raise standards and achievement by:
  - ensuring the pace of the checks on the school's work are even more prompt and leaders set specific, measurable targets for improvement and evaluate their effect more regularly.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils from all backgrounds make good, and sometimes better, progress across the school. Some inconsistencies remain however, and this means progress is not yet outstanding.
- In the past, rates of progress in English and mathematics from one year to the next were less consistent. The reasons for this have been identified and actions taken so that increasing proportions of pupils currently in the school are making consistently good progress. As a result the trend in attainment currently remains average at Key Stage 2, though an increasing number of pupils reach the higher Level 5, with a few achieving Level 6. At Key Stage 1 the levels pupils achieve are rising, due in part to the recent focus on the teaching of phonics to improve reading and writing and a whole-school mathematics initiative.
- Pupils enjoy lessons although their concentration and progress dip at times when they are less actively involved. Their progress is most rapid in those lessons where teachers check regularly how well pupils are doing and promptly adapt activities to increase the challenge or provide support where needed. Pupils are keen to share their ideas with one another and talk confidently about their learning because teachers are good at providing them with the opportunity to try out ideas and evaluate their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because the special educational needs leader and teaching assistant regularly check to make sure work that is planned for them, whether in small groups, individually or in lessons, is closely tailored to their needs.
- The pupil premium grant is used to pay for small-group activities in reading, writing and mathematics as well as for additional adults to support these pupils in class. As a result the majority of pupils in receipt of this funding are now making the same good, or in some cases better, progress as their peers. For most pupils there is little difference between the average scores in English and mathematics achieved by both groups, and for a few who have additional needs and may be up to a year behind, the gap is narrowing.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Senior leaders regularly check on teachers' performance and their own evaluation of teaching is accurate. These checks help staff to know what they need to work on to raise pupils' achievement.
- Support from leaders, lead teachers from the local authority, additional teaching sessions for groups of pupils at risk of falling behind and teacher training have enabled some teachers to improve their practice rapidly this year and pupils' outcomes as a result. Consequently, teaching is good overall, and at times outstanding.
- Some inconsistencies remain, however, especially in the way teachers use assessment to add additional challenge where needed and adapt activities during the lesson. Occasionally, teachers spend too long talking to the whole class without taking account of the different abilities of pupils. Such inconsistencies hinder some pupils' progress while others struggle to keep up.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils and interesting activities keep the pupils focused and support learning well. They help to foster pupils' eagerness to work and their positive attitudes to learning. Most parents and carers commented positively on how their children enjoyed school and were keen to attend, a key factor in supporting good achievement.
- Pupils regularly receive advice on how to improve, both through marking in their books and comments from teachers during lessons so that pupils who are struggling know where they went wrong and what to do next. However, opportunities are not always taken in all classes to give pupils sufficient time to reflect on teachers' comments. Similarly the most-able pupils do not always receive the same precise advice on what to do next or have the chance themselves to identify how to improve or how successful they have been. As a result, progress is less rapid.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are eager to work and have positive attitudes to learning. The school's positive promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means pupils work cooperatively and get on well together, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity. However, occasionally, when the lesson does not engage pupils sufficiently, their behaviour dips and they become less attentive.
- Pupils appreciate that they are 'noticed' and rewarded for behaving well and working hard. They like the class and school charters and think that the system of sanctions and rewards is fair and helps pupils to behave well. While the behaviour of a very small number of pupils is challenging, it is very well managed by staff. Pupils themselves commented on how good the school is at helping pupils to improve their behaviour.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree the school keeps pupils safe. The school works hard to ensure pupils develop a good understanding of their own personal safety. For example the importance of using the internet safely helps make sure pupils have a good understanding of risk and how to keep safe.
- Bullying, such as name calling and cyber bullying, are uncommon. Pupils are very clear about just what bullying entails, understand how unhappy it can make a person and know who they could turn to for help if needed. As a result, they are keen to stop it from happening in their school. The very large majority of parents and carers feel any problems they and their children may have are dealt with positively.
- Pupils' attendance is high and they arrive punctually to school and at lessons.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher, supported particularly well by the deputy headteacher and governors, has developed an effective team of leaders who share his vision to bring about improvement and make pupils' progress even better.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. They work closely with the local authority advisors, seek their expertise and receive good quality support. For example, as a result of the introduction of initiatives such as daily 'Number Fitness' sessions, support for teachers from a local school and involvement in the very popular 'International Mathematics' scheme, achievement in mathematics has risen. Similarly provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved following support from the local authority advisor.
- While plans for development have been successful in raising achievement, at times, they lack sufficiently precise targets that are evaluated promptly and thoroughly enough to accelerate pupils' progress further.
- Leaders at all levels have concentrated on improving the consistency and quality of teaching. Difficult conversations about teaching performance are not shirked when these are necessary. School leaders recognise they need to help staff further to secure greater consistency and more outstanding teaching.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils so there is no discrimination. Checks on pupils' progress and meetings discussing pupils' progress have become more rigorous and hold staff to account more effectively. This makes sure all are doing equally well and that those pupils who are identified for help, including those receiving the pupil premium, make the same progress as other pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body knows the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members are able to challenge as well as support school leaders and hold them to account for pupils' achievement because they have a very thorough working knowledge of pupils' progress information. This ensures they have an accurate understanding of how pupils are performing compared with national standards. They are clear how the monitoring of teachers' performance is used to develop teaching further, its close links to pupils' progress and how this is reflected in the

salary structure. In their recent appointment of a new headteacher, a key priority was a strong classroom practitioner who could continue to develop and improve the quality of teaching. Governors can explain how the pupil premium budget has been planned to enable a wider range of strategies to be provided to accelerate the progress of eligible pupils. Oversight of safeguarding is systematic and the school meets the government's requirements. Governors check their own skills and seek training to maintain their effectiveness. Consequently they have identified the need to make their checks on the school's effectiveness even more focused, regular and rigorous.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110010
<b>Local authority</b>	Bracknell Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	413181

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	243
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rachel Phillips
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Litson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September–1 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 420878
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