

# Culvers House Primary School

Orchard Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 4JH

**Inspection dates** 4–5 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from low starting points to reach at least average standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics.
- Achievement has improved year-on-year because of the strong focus on developing teachers' classroom performance.
- Teaching is good and continuously improving because teachers share good ideas and make regular, rigorous checks on how well pupils in their class are learning.
- Parents and carers are full of praise for the school, and the online survey Parent View shows the overwhelming majority would recommend it to others.
- Pupils' behaviour at playtime and around the school is impeccable and they have exemplary attitudes to learning.
- The school has adopted a range of effective strategies for improving attendance, which has risen year-on-year since the previous inspection.
- The performance of staff at all levels is managed highly effectively. Governors support senior leaders in implementing a range of measures to share good practice across the school, ensuring all pupils get an equal chance of achieving success.
- Pupils in the specialist base make good progress because the school meet their needs well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching across all year groups to ensure pupils make and sustain rapid progress in all subjects.
- On occasions, there are a few pupils who do not contribute answers to questions as regularly as others so teachers cannot assess whether their progress is as rapid as it could be.
- Sometimes, teachers do not always make it clear that more-able pupils can move directly on to harder tasks.
- The transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1 is not smooth enough to ensure that pupils continue to make the same level of progress across their first term in Key Stage 1.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were joint observations with senior members of staff. Each class was seen at least once and lessons observed included the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and guided reading.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, attended an assembly and held meetings with pupils, staff, and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 51 responses to Parent View, and conversations with, and correspondence from, parents and carers during the course of the inspection. They also took note of the 25 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team looked carefully at pupils' work in lessons and work pupils have completed over time in their books.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including those relating to safeguarding, child protection, attendance and behaviour. They looked at the school's own self-evaluation and development planning as well as information relating to pupils' academic performance, documents highlighting the checks made on the quality of teaching, and the governing body minutes.

## Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Michael Buist	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for children looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of service families, is higher than the national average. There are no pupils looked after by the local authority or from service families currently in the school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is in line with national averages while the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly higher.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A range of minority ethnic groups are represented in varying proportions.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is lower than national and very few of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a specialist base for six pupils with physical disabilities.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make and sustain rapid progress across all year groups by:
  - using a range of different strategies to encourage those few pupils who do not regularly contribute in whole-class question-and-answer sessions to demonstrate their understanding
  - ensuring more-able pupils move quickly on to the planned extension activity
  - streamlining the transition of children from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1 in order to ensure there is no interruption to their progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school with skills that are below those expected for their age, particularly in number, communication and language. Their needs are very well met in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff take careful note of their interests and abilities, and plan lessons to maximise engagement and enjoyment. Children therefore develop very positive attitudes to learning from the earliest opportunity.
- Transition into Year 1 is not as smooth as it could be, and the pace of pupils' progress falters a little before picking up again later on in the year. This is because the teaching strategies are too dissimilar and pupils are not ready for such formal learning.
- Despite this minor setback, during their time at the school, pupils make good progress to leave, at the end of Year 6, with standards in English and mathematics equivalent to, and sometimes above, those expected of 11-year-olds.
- Pupils make especially good progress in reading. From low starting points, they catch up with their peers by the time they sit the phonics check towards the end of Year 1. This puts pupils in good stead to continue to develop key reading skills so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, all of them have reached the standard expected for their age, which is a higher proportion than seen nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because class teachers take account of their starting points when planning lessons and specialist programmes are carefully evaluated to ensure maximum progress.
- Pupils in the specialist base achieve well because their needs are exceptionally well met. Staff are carefully deployed to support their learning and work closely together to ensure that progress is at least as good for these pupils as it is for all others.
- The school uses the additional pupil premium funding effectively and robust checks are made on how much progress is made in any specialist provision offered. In this way, the gap between the attainment of pupils entitled to this funding and other groups in school is being narrowed at a greater rate than it is nationally. For example, average points scored in national tests show that, although there is still a gap of nearly two terms in English, this represents a narrowing of over a term compared to the previous year. In mathematics, there is a similar gap and the gain on the previous year is approximately six weeks.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well because teachers explain activities clearly and there is a focus on developing the vocabulary needed to discuss topics in detail.
- Pupils from different groups all achieve similarly well because the school is fully committed to tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection because leaders put in place a range of effective measures to ensure teachers have opportunities to improve their practice.
- Activities are planned that take into account the full range of needs of the class and teaching assistants are effectively deployed to provide high-quality support. Specialist teaching groups aimed at supporting pupils who need an extra boost are evaluated carefully to ensure they have maximum impact. However, more-able pupils do not always feel they can move on to the extension activities planned for them before checking with the teacher, and this means their progress occasionally slows.
- Teachers set pupils clear targets and pupils understand that meeting these will enable them to move on to the next level in their learning. Consequently, pupils are keen to produce work which shows the required elements have been put in place. For example, several pupils in Year 6 were supported by the teacher to use more advanced punctuation such as brackets and dashes, and the work in their books shows that they mastered this quickly, which had a significant impact on

the overall quality of their writing.

- Teachers are diligent in marking pupils' work, particularly in English and mathematics. They make comments which clearly show pupils how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Pupils then respond to these comments and this establishes an ongoing dialogue which clarifies understanding and therefore drives strong progress.
- Teachers ask a good range of questions to ensure pupils have a chance to demonstrate their understanding in lessons. However, there are a few pupils who do not contribute as regularly as they should, which limits the teacher's ability to gauge how much progress they are making.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Pupils, including the very youngest, show exemplary attitudes to their learning, making decisions about how to help themselves concentrate and achieve the best possible results in lessons. For example, in Nursery, children listened very hard and followed all the puppet's instructions in their phonics lesson, which helped them learn how to spell simple words.
- Pupils from all the diverse groups that make up the school community work and play together in harmony because the school places great value upon fostering good relations, and consequently a strong ethos of respect and collaboration permeates playtime and lessons.
- Attendance has risen year-on-year since the previous inspection so that it is now broadly average because the school has put a range of effective measures into place to encourage and celebrate good attendance.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who completed Parent View agree that the school keeps their child safe, and pupils say they feel safe. Pupils are also helped to understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations such as on the internet and on the roads.
- Pupils understand clearly what constitutes bullying. They are clear that bullying is repeated and vindictive, and say that there are no incidents of such behaviour, but admit that very occasionally pupils use derogatory language. Thoughtful and mature, they assured inspectors that this was not usually malicious, but largely a result of pupils not understanding the full implications of particular words. Once pupils had the terms explained to them, they were loath to use them.
- Pupils feel staff are fair and consistent in the way they promote good behaviour. Strong teamwork and a clear understanding of the measures needed to support pupils who have particular behavioural difficulties have secured a dramatic reduction in the number of exclusions.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leadership and management are good because they have instituted a range of improvements since the previous inspection resulting in pupils making better progress. They are not yet outstanding because achievement is not outstanding.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection by establishing a culture of openness where staff support each other to develop their practice. They set challenging targets for teachers and make it clear that advancement depends upon meeting these.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths. They make astute decisions when planning for continuous improvement and consequently outcomes for pupils have improved year-on-year.
- Middle leaders contribute to driving up standards in their area of responsibility far more than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection and now offers good opportunities for pupils to develop reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Subject leaders ensure knowledge and skills build year-on-year and support teachers in evaluating pupils' progress to ensure all pupils have an equal chance of excelling.

- There are plenty of opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, texts studied contain moral and ethical dilemmas that pupils explore and debate and assemblies encourage collective reflection upon deep and important themes. After-school clubs, trips and visitors add depth to topics studied. Pupils are introduced to the work of a range of famous artists which ensures they produce their own high quality art and broadens their cultural horizons.
- The local authority supported the school well during the early days of improvement. Now that the school has good capacity to continue to improve, support is light touch. The local authority shares samples of how well pupils' books are marked as exemplars to develop good practice across the borough.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are clear about how the school compares to other schools nationally and develop robust plans to drive their quest for excellence. They have had in-depth training on, among other things, how to interpret information about pupils' achievement and consequently they question school leaders in great detail to ensure all pupils are getting a fair deal. Governors support senior leaders in ensuring pay is matched equitably to performance by, for example, not endorsing a pay rise where performance does not yield expected results. Governors are focused on improving the quality of teaching because they understand that that is the key to driving up standards and are aware of where underperformance has been tackled in the past. They ensure funding is well used. For example, they know that the pupil premium is spent effectively because the gap is narrowing. Safeguarding procedures are highly robust and more than meet national 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131103
<b>Local authority</b>	Sutton
<b>Inspection number</b>	400136

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	387
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Cavadino
<b>Headteacher</b>	Robert Eyre-Brook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15–16 June 2011
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