

Curridge Primary School

Curridge, Thatcham, RG18 9DZ

Inspection dates 17–18 September 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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. By the end of Year 6 attainment is consistently above average. Attainment is often well above average in reading and writing.
- The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding and they make rapid progress in their learning.
- Pupils behave extremely well and have very positive attitudes to learning. They say that they feel very safe in school and understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The high-quality and detailed marking provides pupils with very clear guidance on how they can improve their work.
- A revised system for setting individual targets for pupils based upon thorough and detailed assessment of their needs is already being used effectively. This gives an accurate record of the progress made by all pupils including that of different groups.
- The high-quality leadership and management, including the governors, means that all actions are very well focused either upon maintaining high standards or upon bringing about a rapid and sustained improvement in areas where achievement is comparatively lower, such as in mathematics.
- Robust school self-evaluation enables leaders and managers to quickly identify where improvement is needed. This information is then used effectively to inform a very well-focused school development plan that sets out ambitious but realistic improvement targets.
- The school provides a broad and rich curriculum that offers high-quality opportunities for learning, including for sport despite the lack of a school field.
- The school has very strong links with parents and carers and the local community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Achievement in mathematics at the end of Year 6 is not as good over time as it is in reading and writing.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is not as consistently good over time as it is in reading and writing because it is too early to see the impact of recent significant improvements.
- The school has identified that former strategies for teaching mathematics did not bring about consistency for pupils and limited their understanding.
- The school has also identified the need to improve opportunities for learning problem-solving techniques in mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons involving five teachers. Some of these were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised. Pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 were heard reading.
- The inspector held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, and staff, and spoke with a representative of the local authority. He also spoke to pupils and lunchtime staff during break times and lunchtimes.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and considered additional information gained from an examination of the school's self-evaluation and the associated school development plan.
- Other documents looked at included curriculum planning, those relating to safeguarding and child protection, records of pupils' attainment and progress, records of behaviour and information relating to the monitoring of teaching.
- The responses of the 22 parents and carers to the online questionnaire Parent View were analysed and a large group of parents and carers were consulted at the start of the school day.
- Responses to inspection questionnaires received from eight members of staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Stephen Lake, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most primary schools. It has four classes. The youngest children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a separate class. All other classes each contain two year groups.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- More pupils than usual leave or join the school other than at the normal time. Almost all of these are children from service families posted into and out of the nearby barracks.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium (extra money given to the school by the government linked mainly to the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) because of the higher than average proportion of pupils from service families. Very few pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school holds the Artsmark Gold Award and the National Association for Able Children in Education (NACE) Challenge Award. The school has also recently gained the West Berkshire Early Years Quality Award.
- The school is part of a loose federation of other local schools who work together and support each other without formal links.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement in mathematics to match that in reading and writing by:
 - consolidating the improvements made in the way pupils' progress is assessed and make sure that this information is used consistently to set challenging targets for all pupils, especially those who are of average ability
 - securing the new approaches to develop problem-solving skills
 - making sure that there is a greater consistency in the way mathematics is taught, especially in Years 3 to 6.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are broadly in line with those expected at this age. Detailed assessments of their needs and abilities upon starting are used very effectively to plan work closely matched to individual needs. As a result children make outstanding progress. They leave the Reception class with skills that are above those normally found and extremely well prepared for learning.
- In Years 1 and 2 pupils build upon their good start in Reception and typically attainment at the end of Year 2 is at least above average and at times well above in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is very good at teaching children to read. In the most recent assessments of reading skills at age six, the school improved considerably upon the above average 2012 results. This good start is built upon throughout the school and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 attainment in reading is at least above average and often well above. Pupils are confident and fluent readers and show great enjoyment and pleasure in reading.
- Attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 rose for several years but dropped a little in the 2013 assessments with those pupils who were average attaining at Year 2 making slightly less progress than those who were high attaining. Over time attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 is broadly average and the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is average. However, the recent changes to the strategies for teaching mathematics mean that progress is accelerating rapidly and the current Year 6 pupils are predicted to do much better in mathematics than in previous years.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and fully integrated into lessons due to the high-quality support they receive. As a result, their achievement is good.
- The school copes very well with the high turnover of pupils from service families. Excellent support for new children means that they settle in very quickly upon joining the school and often make accelerated progress from the starting points as a result of the way their needs are assessed and met through additional support.
- In the most recent national assessments at Year 6 those pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium attained at levels broadly in line with the 2012 national average but around six months lower than other pupils in the school in reading, eight months lower in writing and around two months lower in mathematics.
- The large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View believe that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The large majority of teaching is good and often outstanding but over time teaching in mathematics has not been as good as that in reading and writing. This is an improving picture as teachers implement the changes that have been identified as necessary to improve achievement in mathematics.
- In a large majority of lessons, information on what pupils already know, can do and understand is used well to provide tasks that challenge all pupils to achieve of their very best. For example in a Years 3 and 4 lesson pupils made outstanding progress as they explored number patterns. Open-ended investigations and high-quality questioning posed a very high degree of challenge, especially to the most-able pupils. However it is too soon to see the full impact of these well-chosen changes in teaching strategies in achievement in national assessments at the end of Year 6.
- Teachers plan carefully to provide lessons that stimulate and motivate pupils to learn and make very effective use of information and communication technology to support learning. Discussion

of the moral dilemmas and the feelings of characters in stories, together with regular studies of other countries as part of their geography, make a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example in a Years 5 and 6 English lesson, drama was used well at the start to simulate a scene from the Blitz. Pupils made excellent progress as they reflected upon characters in London during the Second World War. High-quality guidance and questioning from the teacher encouraged pupils to consider how the characters were feeling, what they might be seeing and smelling and the sounds that they would be hearing. Outstanding progress was also noted in a stimulating Years 5 and 6 lesson on problem solving.

- Teachers mark work frequently and set clear next steps for pupils. The new system of target setting that has been introduced this term is clear to pupils. Good quality assessments of pupils are used to monitor and guide progress and set targets for what pupils should achieve by the end of the year. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 understand these well and are clear what it is they need to do to achieve a certain level in their work.
- The vast majority of the teaching assistants provide good and, at times, outstanding support for pupils who have special educational needs and those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely positive about the way the school looks after them and helps them feel and stay safe. They say that behaviour is usually very good and it is rare for any disruption to lessons to occur. All parents and carers who responded to Parent View feel their children are safe and along with staff and governors feel that behaviour is very good.
- Pupils have a very secure understanding of how to stay safe. They say that they feel very safe in the school and that the school takes very good care of them.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and that related to discrimination. They say that bullying does not really happen and they trust adults to deal with any that might occur.
- The school is a very friendly place. Pupils play together well with older pupils looking after younger ones on the playground. They are polite and courteous towards each other and adults. They have consistently positive attitudes to learning and work together extremely confidently in pairs or small groups.
- The school council is active and encourages all other pupils to take part in the many activities such as the Eco-garden run in partnership with members of the local community. All pupils are very helpful to those moving into the school and as a result pupils new to the school settle in extremely quickly even when they have had difficulties in other placements. This extremely positive and supportive aspect of the school has a huge impact upon pupils' attitudes to learning with all keen to succeed and do their very best.
- Teachers have very high expectations of how pupils should behave and use consistent strategies for managing behaviour that are based securely upon praise. This ensures the small group of pupils who demonstrate challenging behaviour are dealt with effectively to avoid any disruption to learning. Pupils say that the behaviour policy works very well.
- Attendance is above average. The school monitors attendance carefully. As a result attendance has improved over time and there are no pupils with poor attendance.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has a very clear vision and a strong ambition to improve the school even further which is shared by all staff and governors and made very clear to parents and carers. All are committed to driving up standards and work together extremely well to bring this about.
- The school has very close links with parents and carers. This is seen particularly in the Early Years Foundations Stage where an 'assessment wall' that parents and carers can see and check

every day shows how well children are progressing and also allows parents and carers to add comments on the progress their children are making at home.

- The headteacher manages very effective professional development of teachers linked closely to performance management. Teachers speak highly of the support and professional development available. Close links with other schools in the cluster allows sharing of expertise and good practice that benefits professional development further. Additional support is provided by the local authority which recognises that school only requires a light touch approach as it has demonstrated very clearly the ability to bring about improvement through its own efforts.
- The very well-planned curriculum makes excellent links between areas of learning and makes subjects meaningful for pupils. Strenuous efforts are made to ensure that pupils have access to frequent and regular physical activity and good use is made of the primary school sport funding to support this. Lessons in school are supplemented by a wide range of before- and after-school sports clubs such as judo, gymnastics, cross country and competitive sports. Governors are looking to use part of the funding for primary school sport to provide a playing field in partnership with local organisations.
- The school has a close link with a school in France. Exchange visits have taken place for the last five years and information and communication technology is used well to extend the link. There are also links with a school in Cameroon (another French speaking country). These activities not only support the very good provision of a modern foreign language within the curriculum but also make a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school looks after pupils very well and takes all reasonable steps to keep them safe. Procedures for child protection and safeguarding meet requirements. Training in safeguarding and child protection is up to date for staff and governors.
- Detailed records of the attainment and progress of individual pupils are used extremely well to check the progress of pupils and to identify those who need additional support. This also enables the headteacher to check that all pupils are receiving equal access to the curriculum.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed extremely well. Areas for further development are clearly identified and the school development plan sets out very well how these will be addressed. The steady improvement in attainment in mathematics over the last few years, together with the maintenance of high-quality teaching and learning in reading and writing, indicates a strong capacity to improve further.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides very clear direction to the work of the school. Governors ask direct questions about how well pupils are learning and why. The headteacher provides regular reports about the quality of teaching and governors cross reference this to the reports from the school improvement adviser, thus ensuring that they have high-quality information about the quality of teaching. The governing body monitors the budget well. On visits to the school, governors check on the impact of spending, especially the pupil premium funding, and hold the headteacher and staff to account for raising pupils' achievement. Governors are active in ensuring that pupils are kept fit and healthy through the many sports activities and by checking that school meals provide a healthy diet. Governors check rigorously the impact of all spending decisions including those relating to how teachers are rewarded for good performance. They are well aware of what is being done to reward good teachers and tackle areas for improvement. Governors check upon the achievement of pupils rigorously through analysis of national assessments and school assessments of pupils' performance to obtain a clear view on school performance. As a result governors have a very good understanding of where improvement is required. The information on school performance is linked closely to the performance management of the headteacher. Governors make good use of the training offered by the local authority and independent providers to improve their skills.

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	109811
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	426568

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Shires
Headteacher	Marilyn Dollard
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2008
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