

Lee Common Church of England School

Oxford Street, Lee Common, Great Missenden, HP16 9JH

Inspection dates 19–20 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school. Their attainment is above average by the end of Year 2.
- Good teaching in all classes makes learning exciting and helps pupils to develop a love of learning. Lessons are well resourced and all pupils are helped to acquire new skills quickly.
- Pupils love coming to school and are enthusiastic about their work. They behave well, are polite and courteous and feel safe.
- Activities such as the 'Values Tree' help pupils to learn the importance of being kind and caring to others.
- The headteacher and the governing body have successfully built on the school's strengths since the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment has been rising for the last three years and behaviour is much improved.
- Leaders have a good picture of remaining priorities based on accurate evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are given good guidance and support to help them improve.
- The school works well in partnership with parents, carers and the local community. These links help to enrich learning by bringing subjects alive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- When pupils learn about letters and the sounds they make (phonics), groups are too large so that the small number of less-able pupils in each class sometimes find the work too hard, slowing their progress.
- Pupils do not always form letters correctly because handwriting skills are not taught systematically enough.
- Many subject leaders are new to their roles this year. They do not yet play a big enough part in monitoring provision to identify what is going well and what still needs improving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, with members of the governing body, with members of staff and with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 17 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He also talked to some parents and carers individually at the end of the school day.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding documents.
- The inspector analysed eight questionnaires from staff.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized infant school that has three classes. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although a small number have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding given to the school for children known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families) is very low. Most eligible pupils are from the last group in most years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reorganise phonics teaching so that the needs of the less able can be met more closely.
- Improve pupils' handwriting by introducing skills more systematically.
- Give subject leaders opportunities to monitor and check provision so that they can play a full part in driving further improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children start school, most are working at the expected levels for their age, although social and personal skills are noticeably weaker than other aspects of their development. From these broadly average starting points, pupils make good progress. Pupils' attainment is consistently above average by the end of Year 2 and is rising, especially in writing.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children rapidly improve their reading and writing skills. For instance, the children write shopping lists and recognise some letter sounds and numbers. Children's personal skills improve quickly. They develop good independence and begin to share with each other, listen more carefully to adults and follow instructions.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils' skills in English and mathematics improve well. Pupils develop a love of reading and talk enthusiastically about books that they enjoy. All but the least able confidently 'sound-out' new words when reading.
- Pupils write enthusiastically although they do not always form their letters correctly because these skills are not taught systematically enough.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils solve problems confidently and have a good recall of 'number facts'. More-able pupils make good progress, especially in numeracy lessons where they are challenged to think like mathematicians.
- Most pupils make good progress in learning about letters and sounds, and in national phonics screenings at the end of Year 1 the number reaching or exceeding the expected level was above average. However, the small group of less-able pupils in each class improve their skills less quickly and fall behind their classmates because work does not closely enough match their needs.
- Despite this, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress most of the time. They achieve well, with most reaching at least the nationally expected Level 2 by the end of Year 2.
- There are a very small number of pupils who receive additional funding through the pupil premium. Funding provides good quality individual support where needed.
- The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are met well. They make good progress attaining as well as others by the end of Year 2.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school, helping pupils to acquire new skills quickly. The small class sizes are highly beneficial as teachers know each pupil well and they adapt work carefully to meet individual needs most of the time.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a strong early focus on developing children's independence and teaching them the importance of listening to adults and sharing with each other. Adults provide sensitive support but make their expectations very clear so that children's social skills improve quickly.
- Good use is made of the well-resourced outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are given good opportunities to try out ideas for themselves. For example, children experimented with writing as they worked in the 'cafe'. When children work with an adult, questioning is used well to move learning on quickly.
- In Years 1 and 2, lessons are well resourced, with especially good use being made of interactive whiteboards to bring subjects alive and to share skills. There is a good pace to learning because teachers expect pupils to work quickly. Teachers give pupils good feedback on how to improve their work, either through marking or by talking to them about what they have done.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons, and work is usually well matched to these pupils' needs.

However, in phonics lessons, groups are too large, with classes taught as one and learning the same sound. At these times, less-able pupils find the work too hard and are not fully involved. This slows the pace at which their phonics skills improve.

- Across the school, more-able pupils are generally challenged well although there are still some occasional missed opportunities to help them learn even more quickly. They learn especially quickly in numeracy lessons when they are encouraged to think for themselves and to share their ideas.
- Good account is taken of the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Teachers check their understanding of new vocabulary and celebrate their cultural heritage by, for example asking them which language they would use to write a diary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Parents and carers are pleased with how well the school manages pupils' behaviour. It has improved greatly since the previous inspection and is now good. Pupils' great enjoyment of school is reflected in above average rates of attendance and in comments such as, 'I wish I could sleep there.'
- Over the last two years, the school has introduced effective strategies for promoting good behaviour, sensibly consulting with parents and carers about how to do this. These strategies which focus on rewarding good behaviour are well understood by pupils who feel that they are 'fair'. Consequently, pupils are clear about what is expected and they behave well both in and out of lessons. They work hard most of the time, although just occasionally they become inattentive when moving between activities.
- Pupils feel safe. They say that 'there is very little falling out and no bullying'. They are confident that problems, should they arise, would be sorted out quickly. They have a good understanding of many of the dangers they may face in the wider world, for example explaining clearly about how to stay safe near water or when crossing the road. However, pupils are less clear about how to avoid problems when using the internet.
- The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that there is no discrimination. There is a delightful atmosphere at playtimes as pupils of different ages play together, sensibly sharing resources and helping each other.
- There is good focus on encouraging healthy lifestyles. Pupils like eating and selling food that has been grown on their allotment and are enjoying sports lessons with a specialised coach. The latter is being financed by the new Schools Sports Fund (additional government funding to support the development of school sports) and is already having a good effect on teamwork and the health and well-being of pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- There has been a good drive for improvement since the previous inspection. Weaknesses have been tackled well. Planning for future development is based on thorough self-evaluation which accurately identifies what the school does well and what needs improving.
- The headteacher analyses in detail information about pupils' learning so that she can check that all pupils are doing equally well. Where potential dips in progress are identified they are remedied quickly. For example, there has been a strong and effective drive to raise attainment in writing over the last year because leaders identified that not all pupils were achieving well enough.
- The headteacher has a good track record for improving teaching. Teachers are set challenging targets for their own performance, with good use made of training to enhance skills. The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning thoroughly but she takes on too much responsibility for this. Most of the teachers in charge of subjects are new to their roles and have not yet had time to develop their responsibilities fully so that they can play a full part in driving

improvement.

- The local authority has supported the school well, especially in helping the headteacher to identify effective strategies for improving behaviour.
- The curriculum (subjects and topics taught) is rich and varied. It is supplemented well by clubs and visits. Pupils' attainment in writing has improved because the curriculum includes many opportunities to write at length and in different subjects. However, handwriting skills are not taught systematically enough and improve less rapidly.
- Visits and clubs contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, pupils say that a recent visit by an artist helped them to learn 'that anything is possible if you do not give up'.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Training has helped the governing body to develop its role effectively in providing the right level of challenge and support to the headteacher. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher and sensibly check things for themselves by visiting the school to look at data, talk to staff and pupils and to observe lessons. Consequently, governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing in comparison with others. Financial planning is thorough. The use of the pupil premium is checked carefully. Governors know about the quality of teaching and how it is improved, and they ensure that only good teaching is rewarded financially. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are very thorough and meet 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	110428
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	426578

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ros Morris
Headteacher	Alison Lawes
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2008
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