

# Cuffley School

Theobalds Road, Cuffley, Potters Bar, EN6 4HN

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 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.

- Cuffley School is a happy and welcoming place. Pupils enjoy coming to school and get along with one another and their teachers. They feel safe, secure and valued.
- The members of the senior leadership team are very good role models for teachers and pupils alike. Together with a well-informed governing body, they are very effective in driving up pupils' achievement. The quality of teaching and the progress of pupils are checked rigorously.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They quickly develop independence and very good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils make good progress and reach high standards in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2. They read well and are articulate and confident.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are interesting, well planned and engage pupils well. Pupils like their teachers and enjoy learning.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural very well through a wide range of activities. Pupils behave well and look out for one another.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils, particularly the most able, are not always given hard enough work that will really stretch them.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is not consistently as good as it could be in every group and subject.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 29 lessons or parts of lessons, including 11 joint observations with senior school leaders, and looked at pupils' written work.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, the headteacher and other school leaders. A telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and informally with other pupils in lessons and around the school. An inspector listened to other pupils reading and talked to them about their reading habits.
- Several of the school's documents were examined. These included the school's own evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, the school's information about pupils' progress and the support given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, evidence about the quality of teaching and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of 136 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), together with the views expressed by parents as they arrived at school to pick up their children and in five letters or emails, and analysed 35 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

James McVeigh, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nigel Sagar

Additional Inspector

Gillian Walley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Cuffley School is larger than the average primary school and there are two classes in each year group.
- The large majority of pupils come from a White British background and the remainder from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. There are fewer pupils than average who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care and other groups) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, are below the national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure that teachers plan activities for the most-able pupils that really stretch them.
- Ensure that the progress of pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs is consistently good or better in all years by monitoring their progress closely to check the effectiveness of the support given.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school in Nursery with knowledge and skills typical for their age. Staff in the Early Years Foundation work as a cohesive team, engaging and challenging children well, for example through skilful questioning, so that children make good progress. Children quickly learn how to share or take turns. They rapidly become independent and show very good attitudes to learning. They start Year 1 with levels of development that are above what is expected.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. At the end of each key stage, pupils reach much higher standards in English and mathematics than average. Their progress has shown continual improvement over the last three years. In 2013, the proportions of Year 6 pupils who exceeded the expected progress in Key Stage 2 were higher than found nationally in writing and mathematics, and similar to that found nationally in reading. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language do much better than their peers in school and nationally.
- Pupils read fluently and regularly. They develop wide vocabularies and speak clearly and confidently. The school successfully promotes a love of reading. For example, reading diaries encourage reading daily and effectively help parents to support their children's developing reading skills. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught well. The result of last year's phonics screening check was above the national average.
- The school's focus on writing has resulted in much higher standards. Exciting events have been staged to inspire boys and girls in their writing. For example, a recent 'alien-spaceship landing' sparked great interest in writing.
- The school accurately identifies disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teachers and teaching assistants provide well-planned and well-targeted extra support. The school works closely with parents, carers and with outside agencies. Overall, this small group makes good progress, but the school has identified that progress in some years is less rapid than in others.
- The school is using the pupil premium funds effectively to support and enhance the experience of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, who are make good progress. Although they perform better than such pupils nationally, they are not attaining as highly as their peers in school, although the gap is narrowing. In 2013, the attainment gap between pupils eligible for the premium and others had narrowed from around two terms to one in both English and mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers plan lessons that pupils find interesting and often use skilful questioning to extend pupils' understanding further and to make them think harder. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss their ideas within small groups and to assess the quality of their own and other's work.
- Teachers have developed good relationships with their classes and manage them well. They have high expectations of behaviour and productivity. Lessons are calm orderly affairs where pupils are eager to learn. Year 5 pupils were thoroughly engrossed and working hard exploring the use of a computer application to create animations of three-dimensional objects in an

outstanding information technology lesson.

- Pupils like their teachers and enjoy learning. They know they will get help if they need it and they know how well they are doing. Pupils know what they have to do next to improve.
- Teachers explain clearly how to carry out tasks and what they expect pupils to be able to do at the end of the lesson. They usually plan different activities to match the learning needs of different pupils, but the activities are not always challenging enough for the most-able pupils or they are not moved on to harder tasks quickly enough.
- Children are taught well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers and teacher assistants regularly check and record how well children are doing and organise appropriate activities in response. Parents have the opportunity each morning to see how their children are learning and how they can give them further support at home. Shortcomings in provision have been recognised and new resources have been ordered to make the environment more stimulating and provide better activities, for example, to develop fine motor skills.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently. They comment on what pupils have done well and usually what they need to do next. This feature is stronger in English than mathematics where there is less focus on how to improve. Pupils are now expected to respond to teachers' comments so that a dialogue is building up between each pupil and their teacher about their work.

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

- Pupils' good behaviour makes an important contribution to the calm and harmonious atmosphere in the school. Parents, carers, governors and staff agree that pupils behave well. Pupils are happy and feel safe, valued and well cared for at school.
- Pupils understand the school's 'six Rs', which include Respect and Responsibility, and strive to live up to them. They get on really well with one another and are courteous and polite as they move around the school and in lessons. At break times, pupils look out for anyone sitting on the colourful 'friendship' bench who need someone to play with.
- Pupils have positive attitudes in their lessons. They take pride in their work and are eager to learn. Little time in lessons is wasted correcting minor misbehaviour. Occasionally, when work is too easy, pupils become restless and do not concentrate well enough.
- Several roles of responsibility are available to pupils, such as school council representative, sports or team leader and referee. Year 6 pupils are keen to volunteer to help others as trained peer mediators. Visiting residents of a local old people's home were very impressed with the politeness and confidence of pupils who sat with them at lunchtime to show them their work.
- Due to the school's strenuous efforts to promote good attendance, for example, by celebrating high attendance by individuals, pupils' attendance has been improving and maintained above the national average for the last three years. Punctuality is monitored closely and is good.
- Pupils know how to stay healthy and about important safety issues, for example, when using the internet or meeting strangers. Year 6 pupils remember clearly what they learned about road safety when they looked at roads in the local vicinity.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and its different forms. They can

distinguish it from minor quarrels. Despite the concerns expressed by a very few parents and carers, pupils say that bullying at school is rare, and tackled quickly and effectively by their teachers. The school's records on behaviour show very few incidents of bullying or serious misbehaviour in the recent past.

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

- Senior leaders are very positive role models. They share high expectations and values, encapsulated in the 'six Rs', with governors and staff. School leaders have a detailed understanding of the school and have set appropriate priorities in clear plans for further improvement.
- School leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and ensure that any underperformance is tackled immediately. Teachers work hard to improve their own practice. They receive regular training and support, for example through shared planning with specialist colleagues and engage in 'lesson studies' – action research projects studying the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress.
- Subject leaders are supported well through well-focused training and mentoring to develop their leadership skills. Recently qualified teachers are all mentored by experienced staff and receive training in phonics, reading and writing tuition, as well as for their individual needs.
- Pupils' progress is assessed regularly and closely analysed. Any pupils who underperform are given appropriate support. Targets for teachers include raising the achievement of pupils and meeting these targets influences their progress along the pay scales. The school is well aware of the need to enhance the confidence and experiences of its less advantaged pupils. Learning mentors are trained to not only provide subject specific support to pupils but also to develop pupils' self-esteem.
- The school provides a broad and balanced range of subjects and positive experiences that promote achievement and prepare them well for their next steps in education. The focus on 'thinking skills' and 'learning to learn' motivates pupils and encourages mature learning behaviour. The school has been awarded 'Thinking School' status by the University of Exeter. A rich programme of trips, visitors and clubs, together with the effective use of information technology resources, such as hand-held computers, the libraries and the nature reserve, enhance pupils' learning experience further.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well through assemblies, including by a charity organisation on rights and responsibilities. Pupils participate in a whole-day conference highlighting the UNESCO 'rights for the child'. They visit different places of worship and have links with schools abroad. All forms of discrimination are effectively discouraged and there is equality of opportunity for all.
- Sport and music are particularly well represented. For example, sailing extends pupils' experience of sport beyond the more usual field sports they participate in each week. Pupils have a chance to try out and learn several musical instruments and play in an orchestra. Pupils speak highly of their experiences in the choir and performing at the O2 arena. The school intends to continue its promotion of wider participation in sport and good health by using the sports funding in partnership with local primary and secondary schools for specialist teaching in a variety of sports.
- The school makes good use of the local authority support to give a regular objective view of its

performance and verify its own judgements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has a wide range of relevant skills and has augmented this with focused training and regular visits to the school. It ensures that it is well informed about the quality of learning and pupils' progress, and that the school is financially sound. Governors act as critical friends, providing good support particularly to school leaders, but always asking whether the school's performance is good enough. They ensure teachers' movements along the pay scale are justified and that the pupil premium is used effectively. They set robust targets for the headteacher to meet. All statutory arrangements for safeguarding are securely in place.

## 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>	117565
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425380

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>	451
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Charlotte Jeffrey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Wendy Heyes
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September 2008
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