

Micklands Primary School

Micklands Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6LU

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress pupils make from their different starting points is not good. Pupils, including those for whom the pupil premium provides support, more-able pupils and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, do not achieve as highly as they should.
- The quality of teaching has not sufficiently challenged pupils to progress at a fast enough pace and interest them in their learning. In some lessons pupils do not have enough opportunities to complete their work independently and to apply their knowledge.
- School data regarding assessments of pupils' progress is sometimes inaccurate. As a result, teachers do not plan activities that are at the right level for all pupils to make good progress.
- Marking, feedback and pupils' targets do not always give pupils clear enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- The role played by senior leaders in improving the schools performance has not been sufficiently rigorous in the past, however with the support of middle managers this is now improving.
- All staff have not been fully involved in planning for school improvement. Professional development has not been well matched to the needs of the school and individual teachers. Checks on the quality of teaching have not always been focused on pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has already improved self-evaluation and is focusing on improving teaching which is improving.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 improved in 2013.
- The school promotes pupils spiritual, social, moral and cultural development well.
- Children progress well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons and part-lessons including seven joint observations with the senior leadership team. In addition, inspectors heard children reading and scrutinised work in books.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, members of the governing body including the acting chair, school staff and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 102 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as correspondence from parents.
- Inspectors observed the schools work and analysed a large range of documents and policies, including the schools own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation and records relating to behaviour. Safeguarding documents were also scrutinised.
- The views of staff were analysed through the 32 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Smith

Additional Inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Micklands is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is higher than the national average. Pupil premium is additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils with a parent in the armed services. Currently there are no pupils from forces families on roll.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average, as is the number of pupils whose first language is not English.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government.
- A new headteacher took up her post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to enable pupils to progress at a faster rate by ensuring that:
 - progress data is accurate and that teachers use that information to plan tasks that are the right level for all pupils so they are not too hard or too easy
 - pupils have adequate time to complete their written work
 - marking and feedback sets high expectations and identifies the next steps pupils need to take to improve their work
 - lessons capture pupils interest so that they develop positive attitudes to learning and have opportunities to find things out for themselves.
- Raise standards, particularly at Key Stage 2, and speed up pupils progress in English and mathematics by:
 - regularly tracking those eligible for pupil premium funding and providing additional help to ensure they progress at a comparable rate to their peers, particularly in mathematics
 - raising the expectations of staff about what pupils are capable of achieving, particularly for those who are more-able
 - providing more focused additional support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, particularly in Year 6.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all leaders, managers and staff are involved in checking how well the school is doing and in planning for its future
 - the staff are given more opportunities to improve their skills through a planned programme of professional development
 - checks on the quality of teaching are focused on improving pupils' progress.

Full Report

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress over time is too slow. This is because in many lessons the pace of learning is not fast enough. Over time, the cumulative effect is that there are limited opportunities for pupils to work independently to complete their work and write extensively. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is improving and results in 2013 were above previous national levels in reading and mathematics. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 also improved in writing and mathematics in 2013.
- Some pupils, particularly those who are more-able, do not feel that work is challenging enough for them. In many lessons tasks limit pupils' ability to further improve their skills; this is because teachers are occasionally unclear where each child is in their learning.
- Within the school, pupils who received the pupil premium in 2012 were about 7 months behind their peers in English and mathematics. In 2013 those eligible for pupil premium funding still did not progress at a comparable rate to their peers, particularly in mathematics. The school is working hard to close this gap with additional support from teaching assistants in lessons and one-to-one sessions out of class. The school is beginning to check the effectiveness of the additional support work, but it is still at too early a stage to identify any significant impact on the progress of this group of pupils. Gaps in the performance of these pupils, when compared with other pupils nationally are narrowing.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is not consistently good. Those who are now in Year 6 made slower progress last year than pupils in other year groups. This is because their progress is not regularly monitored.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- Pupils in Year 2 read with expression and fluency. They enjoy reading and read at home for pleasure. Pupils in Year 1 are making steady progress to learn letters and sounds and they reach above average standards in the phonics reading check.
- Children in the Reception classes make good progress. In the lessons observed, and in the sample of children's work inspectors looked at, there was a consistent approach to developing children's communication skills which promotes their early reading, writing and numeracy skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There is not enough good teaching across the school to eradicate previous underachievement. The rate of progress in many lessons is sometimes too slow and not enough is demanded of the pupils in terms of the quality and quantity of work that they should produce.
- Sometimes activities are not set at exactly the right level so that some pupils find the work too hard whilst others find it too easy. As a result, a few pupils lose interest and their progress slows. When talking to pupils in Key Stage 2 many are keen to move up the National Curriculum levels and say they would appreciate more guidance on how they can improve.
- Marking and feedback are inconsistent and do not promote high expectations. This means that pupils are not always clear whether their efforts are correct. It also means that when errors are made these are not always picked up and tackled. Although, in some classes pupils are given some 'next steps' that tell them how to improve their work, this is not the case throughout the school.

- Some teachers make maximum use of the time available to improve progress. In all classes when pupils come into school in the morning they have an 'early morning work book' and whilst in some classes these had been well used in others they had not be used at all.
- There is some good teaching in the school, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and some in Years 5 & 6. Where the quality of teaching is good, the pace of learning is brisk, pupils know precisely what they are learning and what they have to do to meet the teachers high expectations. There are opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves and questioning is used well. In these classes marking is clear and tells pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve, pupils respond well to the marking and edit or correct their work accordingly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are variable. In lessons where the pace is a little slow or the activity hasn't captured their interest pupils can become restless and talk when the teacher is talking. Pupils reported that they didn't have many chances to find things out for themselves. In the best lessons where pupils were well motivated, they cooperated extremely well and supported each other's learning.
- Behaviour observed around the school was better, pupils are commonly polite and courteous and Key Stage 2 pupils said that it had improved considerably. They like the traffic light system which clearly reminds pupils how they have behaved that day. There is a strong culture of the older pupils helping the younger ones. Year 5 & 6 pupils show a huge empathy for younger pupils and they enjoy acting as friendship buddies.
- All pupils have a mature understanding of the different forms of bullying such as cyber-bullying and racism. They told inspectors that any incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with well by teachers. Most parents who responded to the on line questionnaire Parent View consider that there are few issues with bullying and that their children feel happy and safe in school. School records confirm the view, showing that any concerns raised by pupils, parents or carers are carefully documented and dealt with appropriately.
- Attendance is slightly below average and the school works closely with the educational welfare officer.
- The school prides itself on being a welcoming community and all those who were spoken to felt that their values were respected. The school supports charities, operates a house system and a school council which contributes well to moral and social development. Cultural and spiritual development is also well considered.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and staff are not all involved in checking on how well the school is doing and making plans for the future. Staff are not given enough opportunities to develop their skills with training so teaching can improve quickly and pupils can make good progress
- Leaders have not held teachers to account rigorously enough for the progress pupils make and there has not been sufficient focused support to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress. The monitoring of teaching has been unclear as there was too much emphasis on what the teacher was doing and hardly any on what the pupil was learning. As a result, in the past, performance management was not robust and lacked focus. However this has now been addressed and there is a closer correlation between performance and pay.
- Leaders work to promote equal opportunity and pupils new to the country and those with English as an additional language are appropriately supported to help them become fluent in

English. Positive relationships are promoted and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

- Plans are in place for the new primary school sport funding, which will enhance the existing arrangements and allow pupils to compete in a range of sporting competitions with other local schools. Visitors from a lawn tennis club and students from the local secondary school ensure that pupils have physical education sessions that contribute well to their physical wellbeing.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and enriched by interesting visits. There are a range of extra curriculum sporting activities after school and these have had a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors worked closely with the local authority last year to evaluate the school's performance and this is now more accurate. The local authority is now providing support to improve progress in English and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors took decisive action after the 2012 results and challenged senior leaders to make changes in teaching. As a governing body they assessed their skills and appointed additional governors who had expertise in business and governance. They also undertook training on data so they could understand published data on the school and challenge senior leaders on pupils' progress. Governors are aware of the work the school does to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and for those pupils in receipt of additional funding. They review the impact that the additional resources have on the progress the pupils make. They are fully aware of the close link between performance management and results and are keen to tackle any underperformance and reward good teachers. Safeguarding arrangements and financial management arrangements are in place and the governing body fulfils its statutory duties.

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	109926
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	427313

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	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Parker
Headteacher	Sharon Jones
Date of previous school inspection	January 2011
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