

Totternhoe Lower School

Church Road, Totternhoe, Dunstable, LU6 1RE

Inspection dates 17–18 October 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils make consistently good progress across the school. Pupils attain standards above the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1.
- When pupils leave at the end of Year 4 to go to their middle school, their attainment is about two terms ahead of that expected for their age.
- A particular strength in the school is the high attainment of the more-able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave Year 4.
- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teachers successfully motivate the pupils with their enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. They show that they have high expectations of what each individual pupil is capable of achieving.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is outstanding. Pupils of all ages enjoy working and playing together. They say they feel very safe and well cared for, and they show interest and concern for one another and for their community.
- Pupils have memorable learning experiences and a good range of opportunities that effectively promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good teamwork across the school ensures a consistent drive for improvement. There is a clear plan for the development of the school, and its work is rigorously monitored by leaders and managers.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding to support exceptional progress.
- Marking does not always give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to be fully involved in assessing their own learning and progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector observed pupils in lessons, at play, at lunch and as they moved around school.
- Discussions were held with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, listened to pupils read and checked reading progress records.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed, including records of the monitoring of teaching and of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's view of its performance and the school development plan. In addition, records of meetings of the governing body, safeguarding documentation and reports from the school improvement adviser were reviewed.
- The inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 11 responses to the staff questionnaire received during the inspection. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This village school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils in each year group varies considerably. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding allocated for certain groups such as pupils in the care of the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Pupils transfer to two local middle schools at the end of Year 4.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more teaching outstanding to accelerate pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - teachers' marking consistently identifies how pupils can improve their work further, and pupils have regular opportunities to act on this guidance
 - all pupils are more fully involved in the assessment of their own learning and progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Although there is some variation from year to year, most children in Reception start with skills appropriate to their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning because activities interest and challenge them. As a result of good teaching, pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress and achieve well.
- By the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 to go to middle schools, their attainment is approximately two terms ahead of where pupils are expected to be in both English and mathematics, reflecting the consistently good progress that they have made during their time in the school.
- Pupils read widely and often and their progress in reading is good. All those who discussed reading with the inspector, whether in meetings, lessons or individually, clearly enjoy reading. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4 pupils' attainment in reading is significantly above average.
- Staff have a thorough understanding of each individual pupil's particular needs and use this knowledge to provide specific help where it is needed. Consequently, work is well matched to the abilities of individuals, so they all make good progress. This includes the more-able pupils, who are set more challenging work, and the few who are at an early stage of learning English. An above-average proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in all subjects.
- The school provides effective additional support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, so they make similar progress to others in the school and do better than their peers nationally. The school closely monitors the progress they make and the effectiveness of the extra support they receive.
- The progress of the few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is good and their attainment is above that of others in the school and nationally. In 2013 the Year 4 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were on average about two terms ahead of other pupils in the school in English, and in mathematics they were ahead by about a year.
- Activities across the curriculum are designed to motivate pupils and this helps them develop a love of learning. In lessons and in discussions, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and this is reflected in their good achievement.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good, with some outstanding examples, and this supports pupils especially well in developing their behaviour and fostering positive relationships. Pupils make good progress across all the subjects and in all year groups. In all the lessons observed, a clear structure enabled pupils to understand what they were going to learn and to be challenged at the right level.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good or better. The team of staff work very well together to provide children with an exciting range of opportunities through which to learn effectively. Skills are taught systematically and adults are careful to plan lessons that reflect how young children enjoy learning. For example, children in the early stages of learning to put numbers in order enjoyed a puzzle where they worked happily together to sequence the numbers.

- Teachers also ensure that a wide range of skills, including those needed for good communication, are taught well. This was seen when the children were learning how to introduce themselves, taking it in turns to shake hands and say their name. This was done with delight and was a good example of how teachers engage pupils well using enjoyable activities.
- The school provides an exciting environment in which to learn, and staff use a range of interesting activities and stimuli for learning. For example, in a Year 3/4 science lesson, having previously taken notes from a range of material about worms, pupils were using this knowledge as they excitedly built a wormery. The next day they used a range of software to draw these activities together, explaining their findings in their own words. They produced high-quality presentations which they skilfully illustrated using their research, the practical demonstrations they watched and their own experiments.
- Teachers and teaching assistants, together with other adults, support children's learning very effectively. In Reception they record observations as well as making sure the children are settled into their activities. Elsewhere in the school they skilfully adapt work, giving help when necessary. Such support is having a significant impact on the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Teachers use a wide range of homework approaches to maintain the link between learning in the classroom and at home. The daily reading record and the bags of mathematics games to play that children take home are effective in involving parents in their children's learning.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because assessment and marking of pupils' work, although regular, do not systematically show pupils how they can improve their work and they are not given time to respond to the advice and guidance provided. In addition, teachers do not always make sure there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to assess how well they have done in lessons so they become more independent learners. As a result, teaching does not always have enough impact in helping pupils to improve rapidly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour around the school is exemplary and this helps to create a really warm and friendly community. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; they quickly settle to the tasks they are set, concentrate fully on their work and show a high degree of perseverance.
- Older children are extremely supportive of Reception pupils, taking care to involve and encourage them. During the inspection pupils were earnestly fulfilling the whole-school target for the week of 'working well together as a team'.
- Pupils enthusiastically told the inspector that they get on very well together and feel very safe at school. They said they thoroughly enjoy school life because they are given opportunities to take part in decision-making.
- Pupils are very proud of their fundraising and represent the school in the local community very well. They thoroughly enjoy working on the school's allotment plot in the village and are delighted to sell any produce they cannot use in school to raise money for those less fortunate than they are.
- The school's active promotion of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is

evident in lessons as teachers convey high expectations with regard to behaviour, cooperation and teamwork. Adults raise pupils' awareness of the effects of behaviour on others and provide reminders to take turns and consider the feelings of others. There have been no exclusions over several years. Instances of unacceptable behaviour are rare, and when they do happen they are dealt with fairly.

- Pupils are given the skills they need to manage everyday risks for themselves; for example, safe use of the internet, road safety, fire safety, and dealing with bullying. Pupils know about different types of bullying, including on the internet, and feel able to tell an adult if they need help or support.
- The attendance of pupils has risen steadily over recent years to above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders, including governors, have drawn up detailed plans for continued improvements which are reviewed regularly and thoroughly. Leaders' focus on improving teaching and learning of different groups of pupils, underpinned by effective management of teachers' performance, has resulted in well-chosen support to maintain the good outcomes noted in the previous inspection.
- Leaders use thorough systems to check on pupils' progress throughout the school. Where any gaps in knowledge, understanding or skills are identified the school quickly takes action to boost pupils' learning by providing extra support for small groups or individuals, both in class and out of class.
- The school knows and cares for its pupils as individuals and successfully removes any barriers to learning. As a result, all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. There is no difference in the achievement of different groups.
- Teachers who have leadership roles and those responsible for managing areas of the curriculum undertake effective monitoring and contribute key information to the school's accurate analysis of its own work.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' interests and positive attitudes well by providing frequent opportunities for pupils to learn different subjects and topics. It is enhanced by visits related to topics, which the pupils enjoy. The school is planning to use the new national sports funding with other partnership schools to provide bespoke physical education (PE) activities for each of the schools in the cluster.
- The pupil premium is used to provide small group and individual tuition and specific resources in mathematics and English.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body monitors the performance of the school effectively. Governors ensure that financial resources are managed well and expenditure is linked to school improvement. Governors undertake first-hand monitoring to extend their knowledge of the performance of teachers and pupils gained from reports and presentations. This enables governors to provide appropriate levels of challenge and support. They are familiar with the national Teachers' Standards and use them to help manage teachers' performance. They track the impact of the

spending of any pupil premium funding and are aware of the positive impact it has on pupils' achievement. Safeguarding requirements are met, and are included in the governing body's regular monitoring activities.

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	109488
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	425345

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gifford Kelly
Headteacher	Janet Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2008
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