

Great Alne Primary School

School Road, Great Alne, Alcester, B49 6HQ

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Good school leadership has improved the quality of teaching. As a result, pupils' progress and achievement are now good.
- Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are above average.
- As a result of good provision, children in Reception settle quickly and make good progress from their different starting points.
- An effective governing body is fully committed to driving improvement.
- Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute to the strong sense of community in the school.
- Carefully planned provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that they make good progress.
- Parents and carers are very pleased with the school and the progress their children are making.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes, teachers do not question pupils carefully enough to ensure that all pupils understand before moving on.
- In a few lessons, the pace of learning slows because teachers do not check often enough how well pupils are getting on with their work.
- The targets set for teachers to improve their effectiveness are not linked closely enough to the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not have enough opportunity to observe and learn from good and outstanding teaching in other schools.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. An assembly was observed and a number of other short visits were made to classrooms.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff and pupils, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, some parents and carers at the start of the school day, and an independent external education consultant.
- The inspector heard groups of pupils of different ages reading.
- Account was taken of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspector looked at the school's policies, teachers' planning of learning, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety, together with samples of pupils' work. Tracking documentation of individual pupils' progress, documentation on how leaders manage teachers' performance and records of meetings held by the governing body were also examined.

Inspection team

Kenneth Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes which change from year to year as group sizes vary. This year the composition is: Reception and Year 1, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional government funding for particular groups, such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is close to average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that is consistently good and more is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers keep a close check on the progress pupils make in the work set in lessons so that learning is moved on quickly
 - through the use of questioning, teachers constantly check pupils' understanding so that any misconceptions can be quickly identified and corrected.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - linking teachers' targets more explicitly to improvements in pupils' progress
 - providing more opportunities for teachers to improve their teaching through the observation of good and outstanding practice in other schools.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Because of small cohort sizes, children's skills on entry to Reception can vary widely. The most recent cohorts have started school with skills and knowledge that are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in communication and language, literacy and mathematics.
- Good teaching in Reception means that most children join Year 1 having made good progress in all areas of learning, although progress in literacy and mathematics is not quite as strong as in other areas.
- Good progress continues for all groups of pupils as they move through the school. Because of the small cohort sizes, the performance of individual pupils can have a disproportionate effect on the performance of the school as a whole. This makes comparisons with national figures unreliable. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils who make and exceed the expected progress compares well with national averages.
- As a result of improvements in teaching, standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 rose to be above average in 2013, with a marked improvement in writing. Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 have also risen to be above average over the last two years.
- Progress in writing has lagged behind that in reading, primarily because pupils have not had enough opportunities to write creatively and to write at length across a range of subject. Although the rise in attainment in writing at the end of Year 2 has yet to be seen at the end of Year 6, reviews of pupils' work show that the action being taken to tackle this issue is having a positive impact. Pupils are being given more opportunity to write at length for different audiences and different purposes. This is helping to ensure better progress and is raising attainment.
- Any difference in the attainment of boys and girls tends to be specific to the particular cohort, rather than being a consistent difference across year groups. At the end of Year 6 in 2012, for example, boys outperformed girls while, in 2013, girls outperformed boys.
- Reviews of pupils' work and school assessment information show that current pupils are making good progress and that above-average standards are being maintained. The performance of the most able pupils is improving, with a large proportion of the current Year 6 exceeding expectations for their age.
- Pupils' good progress in reading is underpinned by the regular teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). The results of the 2013 Year 1 reading check were above those found nationally. Across the school, the large majority of pupils develop confidence in reading and, by the end of Year 6, read widely for purpose and pleasure. Standards in mathematics have risen because pupils are given more opportunities to apply and develop their mathematical skills in a wide range of contexts.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the very effective leadership of their provision. Their individual needs are well known and additional support is carefully tailored to meet those needs.
- There too few pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium to comment on their attainment

without identifying them. However, the additional support that is provided is securing good progress for these pupils in both English and mathematics.

- Pupils' health and well-being are enhanced by their participation in the good range of sports activities, including swimming, that the school offers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is mostly good and occasionally outstanding. This ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. The vast majority of pupils display positive attitudes to learning and behave well. This enables teachers to concentrate on teaching.
- English and mathematics are taught well across the school, with an appropriate priority given to these subjects in all classes.
- Lessons are well planned and this helps to engage pupils in tasks that are generally matched well to their different ages and abilities. In a successful mathematics lesson with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, for example, pupils made rapid progress in the use of different multiplication strategies to calculate the area of different shapes, while a group of higher ability pupils grappled with a more complex missing numbers multiplication problem.
- In Reception, adults take every opportunity to encourage children to talk about their learning. In one session, for example, children were earnestly engaged on a variety of activities related to the value of coins, while adults took every opportunity to extend children's understanding through questioning about the coins they were handling.
- Reading is taught well. Daily sessions are carefully structured and well paced. Interesting activities help pupils to focus on the sounds of letters and groups of letters. This helps to develop both reading and writing skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that the work given to pupils who need extra help is carefully sequenced so that all make good progress towards their learning targets. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those eligible for the pupil premium.
- The marking of pupils' work is generally good, with guidance given on what pupils need to do to improve their learning and to reach a higher level in their work.
- While most teachers use questioning well to check pupils' understanding as lessons proceed, occasionally, questions are too closely directed towards drawing out an expected answer and the lesson is moved on without checking that all pupils are keeping up.
- In a few lessons, the pace slows because teachers do not check the progress pupils are making often enough to identify the points at which learning can be moved on more quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In Reception, children quickly learn and accept the school's expectations of behaviour in lessons and around the school. This forms the basis of the good behaviour of the vast majority of pupils that contributes well to the school's positive learning environment.

- Parents, carers, staff and pupils confirm that behaviour is typically good. Pupils are friendly and care for each other well. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other.
- Pupils feel safe and are confident that adults will look after them well if they have any concerns. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection echoed the view that this is a harmonious and welcoming school in which behaviour is good and their children are kept safe.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on jobs and responsibilities within the school, for example, as school councillors or when Year 6 pupils act as 'buddies' for Reception children.
- Effective support is provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This ensures that they are maintained in full-time education and have full access to all the school provides. As one parent wrote, 'My son's behaviour and other issues would have resulted in exclusion in many schools. It is due to the continued support that he is fully integrated in his classroom.'
- Incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils understand about different kinds of bullying, including physical bullying and persistent name-calling, and are emphatic when they say that they cannot think of any incidents of this type or of any racist comments. Behaviour records show that there have been no such incidents for several years.
- Attendance is average. The school places a high emphasis on the importance of regular attendance, which is usually above average. It fell back in the last school year because of the disproportionate impact of the persistent absence of a very small number of pupils on the school's overall attendance figures.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and governing body provide a clear vision for the continuing improvement of the school and this is shared fully by the staff.
- Through rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and the systematic tracking of pupils' progress, school leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and plan effectively for areas that need to be improved. For example, children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage has benefited from improvements in teaching and in the use of the outdoor learning area.
- The school has recently introduced new procedures for managing the performance of teachers. These appropriately recognise that decisions on pay and promotion must be justified by the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. However, the targets set for teachers to improve their work are too general and not closely enough linked to measurable improvements in pupils' progress.
- The school does not benefit from the support of the local authority. As a result, the school has secured a range of additional support and training from other sources. These are linked to the school's improvement priorities. However, because of the school's small size, staff do not have enough opportunity to improve their own work through the observation of successful teaching in a wider range of contexts.
- Through the excellent management of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the carefully targeted use of the pupil premium funding, the school demonstrates its commitment to equality of opportunity.

- Partnerships with parents and carers are particularly good. Those spoken to during the inspection said that they are very satisfied with the quality of education that the school provides. This view is backed by surveys of the views of parents and carers.
 - The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Particularly good use is made of visits to extend pupils' learning. For example, a topic on electricity for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils was enhanced by a visit to Jaguar Land Rover, where pupils were able to observe how important electricity is in the manufacturing process. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through assemblies, where pupils sing harmoniously together, and through music, art and sport, which feature strongly in the curriculum.
 - The additional primary sports funding is being used to enhance provision through, for example, the employment of specialist sports coaches to work alongside and develop the skills of teachers, and to increase the good range of sports clubs already offered to pupils. The school plans to evaluate the impact of these initiatives.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body is very supportive and fully committed to the school's success. Governors have an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and know how its performance compares with that of other schools. Training is up to date and governors are able to hold the school to account and challenge school leaders about areas for improvement. They understand that the pay progression of staff must be linked to pupils' progress. Financial management is secure and governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used for the intended purposes. Governors fully meet their duties, including those related to safeguarding. As a result, the school's arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet all current 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	125511
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	429966

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	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lorraine Armstrong
Headteacher	Lesley Hendrie
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2012
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