

Hannah Ball School

Philip Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JS

Inspection dates 5–6 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		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 good progress from their different starting points.
- Teaching is consistently good and this means that standards are rising rapidly and at a faster rate than is seen nationally.
- Good use of the pupil premium enables eligible pupils to do better than other pupils in the school.
- Pupils who join the school speaking no English pick up the language quickly because of the good support they receive.
- Learning is enjoyable because pupils are actively involved in a wide range of interesting activities.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in class and around the school; they have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and parents and carers agree.
- Leaders, managers and governors have worked together well to bring about rapid improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Attainment in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers do not always use school data to set work that challenges all pupils.
- At times pupils do not have enough opportunities to discuss their ideas before writing.
- Pupils do not do enough writing at length across different subjects.
- Attendance has not been high enough because some families take their children out of school for long periods of time.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, including some joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read and, with the headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- There was only a small number of responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, but the inspector spoke with several parents and carers outside the school and considered the many responses to the school's own survey of parents and carers.
- The inspector considered the 15 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- Leaders, managers and governors are committed to having one year group per class, even though this means some classes are relatively small.
- Most pupils come from many different minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest being Pakistani. Two thirds speak English as an additional language, which is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils from service families) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school mid-way through the school year is above average, many coming from abroad and speaking no English.
- The school has overcome a period of uncertainty when its future was in doubt, originally as an infant school. The school will become an all-through primary in September 2014 when the present Year 5 pupils stay on to become its first Year 6 cohort.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - using data to set work that challenges all pupils
 - giving pupils every opportunity to discuss their ideas before writing
 - creating more opportunities for pupils to write at length across different subjects.
- Increase attendance at least to reach the national average by working even more closely with those families whose children are absent for long periods of time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Improvements in teaching mean that all groups of pupils, including those from a Pakistani background, make good progress. Well-tailored support enables disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to achieve well.
- Children join the school with attainment that is very low. Many come not speaking English. In each year group there is a high turnover of pupils. For example, in the present Year 5, only seven pupils have been at the school since Reception.
- Staff are adept at helping new pupils to settle quickly and to acquire English, so that they make good progress and begin to catch up their peers. By the end of Year 2 in 2013 standards were broadly average in reading, and below average in writing and mathematics. This represented good progress for these pupils, especially as a significant number joined the school in Year 2 speaking no English.
- Attainment is rising rapidly because of the consistently good teaching in all key stages. Across the school, attainment is in line with national expectations in reading and mathematics, but below expectations in writing, even though most pupils make good progress. This is because teachers have not always used data to plan work that challenges all pupils sufficiently or given enough opportunities to pupils to share their ideas before setting pen to paper.
- Children make good progress in Reception because of the emphasis on developing early literacy and numeracy skills. They settle happily and routines are well established. They enjoy a variety of purposeful activities both inside and outside, often linked to a key theme, such as 'fireworks'.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well because the additional funding goes on extra teaching and enables them to reach standards that are often better than those of other pupils in the school. This means there are no gaps in their attainment.
- Teaching assistants give good support to individuals and groups of pupils, especially those who speak English as an additional language and are new to the school. This helps these pupils to make rapid progress in their learning.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Younger children are confident in sounding out unfamiliar words and benefit from reading to volunteers who are former teachers. Even so, the high number of pupils at the early stages of learning English means that the proportion reaching the required standard in the Year 1 reading check was below average in 2013. Older pupils read widely and enjoy talking about the books they have read.
- A focus on improving mathematics has been successful, as pupils use and apply their skills in solving problems in real-life situations, and explain their thinking. As a result, progress is good and attainment has risen.
- More-able pupils are given suitably challenging work, except occasionally when writing. A greater proportion of pupils are now reaching the higher levels of attainment and teachers plan specifically to make sure that work for this group of pupils is sufficiently demanding.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and explain to them how they can be successful. All pupils have targets to show them what they have to do to reach the next level of attainment, and teachers often refer to these in books and lessons so that pupils know exactly how well they are doing.
- Teachers make learning enjoyable by actively involving pupils in their learning and planning interesting tasks that engage them. For example, Year 5 pupils enjoyed finding lines of symmetry in regular polygons and working out a pattern before considering whether the same pattern would apply to irregular shapes.
- Searching questioning checks that pupils understand what they have to do and extends their thinking. Pupils concentrate well and apply themselves fully to their work.

- Good use is made of technology to support learning. Most work is set at the right level for the pupils, but occasionally writing is not challenging enough and sometimes pupils do not have the chance to write at length in different subjects.
- In the Reception class children enjoy a range of activities designed to develop their skills, such as creating a booklet about bonfire night, and making rockets using cones and cylinders.
- In the best lessons teachers make the learning relevant for pupils and use resources extremely well. For example, Year 2 pupils used atlases to find countries and capital cities that were familiar to them, because they had come from there originally. In this class pupils came from 17 different nations. They used grid references to locate the places on the maps, applying their mathematical skills in a geographical context.
- All teachers mark regularly and there is some outstanding practice. Teachers engage pupils in a dialogue about their learning and this helps them to understand exactly what they have to do to improve their work. Books show that pupils make good progress over time and that new pupils make strides in catching up with their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning, are always keen and enthusiastic and work extremely well together. Parents and carers agree that pupils behave very well and are kept safe.
- Behaviour is excellent both in class and around the school. Pupils are extremely considerate of one another and older pupils support the younger ones. Pupils say that there is no bullying, but they know to go to an adult if they have any worries. They know about different types of bullying such as cyber bullying and their understanding is strengthened through assemblies.
- Pupils reflect the school's values of showing respect, and they are unfailingly polite to adults and visitors. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Staff manage behaviour consistently and extremely well. School records show that there are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe, for example regarding fireworks. They know about road safety and keeping safe when using computers.
- Pupils are keen to contribute to the school community, for example through helping out in the dining hall and raising money for charity. The school council plays an active role in improving aspects of the school's work, for example in making sure that playtimes are pleasurable occasions for all pupils.
- Attendance has been too low in the past, mainly because of a small number of families taking extended visits abroad, but has improved this year to be broadly average. The school works closely with families to promote attendance but has not yet been able to convince all parents and carers of the importance of school to their children's education.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has improved rapidly since its previous inspection so that teaching is consistently good and all groups of pupils achieve well. The headteacher's passion for the school is reflected in its clear vision for equality for all and to see each and every individual pupil do his or her very best.
- Leaders and managers have been successful in moving teaching to good and in accelerating pupils' progress so that the gap in attainment with the national average is closing rapidly and the school is improving more quickly than other schools nationally.
- The headteacher has formed a strong team of staff, who all work together extremely well and share best practice among themselves. As a result, there is a common drive for improvement and subject leaders are fully involved in checking teaching and learning.

- Leaders and managers have faced significant challenges from large numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school at different times, often arriving unable to speak any English. They have faced up to them resolutely to see that nothing gets in the way of pupils' achievement through providing high-quality support.
 - Teachers are given clear advice about how to improve and given the training they need. The management of their performance is conducted robustly.
 - The curriculum is well organised and well enriched through themed events such as an Eid party and a Spanish day. There are plenty of clubs for pupils to enjoy and visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well through a wide range of activities, and celebrating the cultural diversity of its population. The primary school sports funding is spent on additional coaching for pupils and staff and a sports partnership with other schools. This is contributing well to pupils' health and well-being. The school has plans to measure the impact of this work.
 - Parents and carers are supportive of the school's work, and say their children are learning well. They take advantage of workshops and courses to improve their own skills and to help their children at home.
 - The school receives good support from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust on behalf of the local authority, especially in confirming the judgements of leaders and managers about how well the school is doing.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The effectiveness of the governing body has improved since the previous inspection, especially with the appointment of new governors who bring relevant expertise, for example from the field of education. They give a good degree of challenge to school leaders, asking the right questions and being clear about what information will help them to support the school and hold it to account. Governors contribute well to driving improvement. They have a good understanding about the performance of pupils and the quality of teaching. They know how targets are set for teachers to improve their work and what the school is doing to reward good teachers and tackle any underperformance. They have been particularly successful in managing the budget to be able to afford small classes without going into deficit. They make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
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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	110324
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	426426

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sebert Graham
Headteacher	Maggie Moore
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 March 2012
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