

Fawkham CofE Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Valley Rd, Fawkham, Kent, DA3 8NA

Inspection dates

12–13 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- The headteacher has ensured through rigorous checking that the quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently good.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because teachers use effective questioning during lessons to deepen their understanding.
- Most pupils leave Year 6 with standards that are at least in line with those expected for their age. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average.
- Children in the Reception class get off to a good start because teaching is good and activities are exciting and fun.
- Pupils make good progress when developing personal skills because the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- The headteacher and the governing body have set a clear route for improvement supported by an accurate understanding of the school's work and precise action plans.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils and their parents and carers are confident that the school keeps them safe at all times.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The overall quality of teaching is not outstanding. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to research, analyse and think independently to ensure that all make outstanding progress.
- Not all teachers use information on their pupils' ability levels to set work at precisely the right level.
- Teachers do not make enough use of the outstanding outside environment when planning activities across all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or part lessons in all four classes. Two of these were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition she listened to some pupils in Year 2 reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, leaders responsible for pupils who have special educational needs, leaders of English and mathematics, a group of pupils and members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Telephone calls were held with a representative from the local authority and the diocese of Rochester.
- Inspectors took account of parental views through the 35 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, the school's own survey and by speaking to parents and carers informally at the end of the day. Staff views were considered from the 12 responses to the staff survey.
- A range of documentation was reviewed including: the school's own analysis of assessment information; the checks on the quality of teaching and how this relates to teachers' salaries; records of any incidents of poor behaviour or bullying; a sample of pupils' books; self-evaluation information and related action plans; and information with regard to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Penny Spencer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Apart from children in the Reception class, all pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent or carer in the armed services, is very small and much lower than the national average. There are no looked after pupils on roll.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a number of staff changes at all levels. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and so improve achievement, by making sure that teachers:
 - plan activities that develop pupils' independent learning skills, by providing more practical opportunities for pupils to research and analyse different topics and subjects
 - make more use of the outstanding outdoor environment to support learning in all areas of the curriculum
 - use assessment even more precisely to plan activities that meet the needs of each individual child.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Reception with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make good progress and most enter Year 1 with skills that exceed age-related expectations.
- Pupils in Year 1 who took the national screening test to check their skills in phonics (the linking of letters to sounds) in 2013, achieved in line with national averages, which was an improvement from 2012. Pupils in Year 2 who retook the test successfully reached the expected standard. This is due to the improved teaching of phonics that has taken place over the past year.
- Pupils who read to the inspector were able to use their phonics skills successfully when reading unfamiliar words and were confident to talk about the story. Pupils across the school enjoy reading and there is a wide range of books for them to choose from.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are above the national average in all subjects and have been improving steadily over time. Standards at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated slightly over time in line with the characteristics of the small cohorts. However most pupils make at least expected progress with many doing better than this. Standards over time are generally just above the national average.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress overall because their needs are now carefully assessed and activities are matched accurately to their ability levels. The school is committed to ensuring there is equality of opportunity for all pupils regardless of their ability and starting points.
- Pupils have access to high-quality physical education and achieve well. Pupils take part in frequent competitions with local schools and the school is highly successful, particularly in football. The take up of after-school sports clubs is high from all groups of pupils.
- The very slight dip in progress in 2013 in mathematics and reading has been carefully investigated. As a result of subsequent improvements in teaching, progress for current pupils has accelerated. The majority of pupils in all year groups are already working above expected levels in all subjects.
- The more-able pupils make good progress and in 2013 the percentage of pupils achieving at the higher level (Level 5) in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. More-able pupils currently in Year 6 are already preparing to work at the very highest levels with support from the local secondary school and headteacher.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was too small for comparisons to be made between their attainment and that of their classmates. However, most of this group of pupils throughout the school make similar progress to their peers and achieve well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Children in the Reception class benefit from the high ratio of adults who support them, allowing them to work in small groups according to ability when appropriate. This was observed during a good phonics lesson, where the more-able children were working with a teaching assistant on tasks that really challenged their ability, while the remainder of the class worked closely with the teacher. The environment is stimulating and good use is made of the outside space to develop their learning.
- Teachers know their pupils well and use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that meet the needs of most pupils. Teachers use good questioning skills to assess pupils frequently during

lessons and to extend their understanding.

- Marking is very thorough and gives pupils good advice on how to improve their work. Pupils have frequent and regular opportunities to respond to this feedback.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils of all abilities. Most support staff have benefited from improved training opportunities and more specific roles within the school, teaching small groups of pupils, specific programmes and activities.
- Assessment procedures are regular and results are carefully analysed by the headteacher to ensure all pupils are continuing to make good progress. Regular meetings with staff ensure that activities are planned to enable pupils who may be falling behind to catch up quickly.
- Teaching is not outstanding because teachers do not always use assessment information to plan work at precisely the right level for individual pupils. Some lessons are too directed and opportunities for pupils to learn by themselves, through experimentation and research, are missed.
- The outstanding outside environment, which includes managed woodland, is not used consistently by all teachers to support and develop this independent learning.
- Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View and spoke to the inspector felt that their child was taught well and makes good progress at school. This was endorsed by the pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They play well together.
- Pupils say they feel safe at all times and that bullying in any form is very rare. They love coming to school and many commented on how the small size of the school means they know everybody and have friends in all year groups. This is also a key factor for parents and carers, who are very supportive of the school and feel their children are well cared for.
- Staff know pupils as individuals and relationships are strong. Older pupils are given many opportunities to be responsible and look after younger pupils. They are very proud of their contribution to assemblies where they provide musical accompaniment for singing and welcoming other pupils into the hall. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Incidents of poor behaviour are infrequent and lessons are very rarely disrupted. The behaviour policy is applied consistently and pupils are keen to earn house points and merits towards the highly coveted 'tea party' with the headteacher. If any incidents do occur they are fully investigated and parents and carers are kept informed.
- The school helps pupils to keep safe through different activities. For example lessons are given on how to stay safe on the roads and when cycling, as well as when using the internet. Even some of the youngest pupils could explain in detail how to stay safe when using various types of websites.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning during lessons. However there are occasions when activities do not allow pupils to work at their own pace or when they are told facts rather than finding things out for themselves. This can lead to a few pupils becoming restless or disengaged and is the main reason why behaviour is not outstanding.
- Pupils are punctual for school and attendance is broadly in line with the national average and improving.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong, determined leadership to the school. She has accurately assessed the key priorities for improvement and put in place secure systems for checking the quality of teaching and assessing the progress of all pupils.
- She has provided specific and high-quality training for all members of staff that has led to rapid improvement in the overall quality of teaching and accelerated progress for current learners.
- Despite the school being much smaller than average, leadership roles have been delegated

among the staff and specific training has been given to ensure that leaders take a full and active role in school improvement. This ensures that capacity for continued improvement is good.

- The headteacher has produced detailed action plans to address any weaknesses. For example the school has focused strongly on improving phonics teaching and mathematics. This has had an immediate impact on pupils in Year 1, producing higher standards in the phonics screening check and improving the progress of all learners in mathematics.
- Challenging targets are set for all staff, closely linked to pupils' outcomes and the key priorities for the school. Effective checking by the headteacher enables her to manage the performance of staff and hold them closely to account for the progress of pupils.
- The school has developed partnerships with other schools in order to provide professional training and share good practice in teaching and leadership. This enables teachers to gain a broader view of different methods and ideas to improve all aspects of the school's work. These opportunities are highly valued by the staff who recognise the benefits and are keen to put their knowledge to good use.
- The primary school sports funding, provided by the government, is being used to provide specialist coaches who are working alongside teachers to develop their skills in teaching specific areas of physical education such as gymnastics. It is also being used to fund entry into a wide variety of inter-school competitions and tournaments. This is having a positive effect on the health and well-being of pupils who are enjoying their successes.
- The curriculum is very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about different cultures through their close and active links with a school in Africa and their lessons on different faiths. Trips and visits to places of interest are frequent and pupils enjoy these activities thoroughly. Topics are being reviewed and new ones introduced in readiness for the new National Curriculum.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are strong and the school is heavily oversubscribed. Opportunities for them to come into school and learn alongside their child are proving very popular in enabling them to support their children's learning.
- The local authority has provided light touch support for this good school and is happy to provide further support on request.
- There are very secure safeguarding procedures in place. Policies meet requirements and staff have all had training in child protection. All staff are thoroughly checked before being allowed to work in school and procedures for visitors are secure while still being welcoming.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge for the headteacher. They have a good understanding of the school and have a wide variety of skills to support the work they do. Recent training has ensured they fully understand their role in determining the strategic direction of the school and they are ambitious for continued improvement. They understand how to analyse assessment information and use this to hold the headteacher to account for school improvement. There are effective systems in place to manage the performance of staff, including the headteacher. Salary increases are closely linked to performance, especially in raising the achievement of all pupils. Governors have a clear understanding of how the pupil premium is being spent and are fully aware of the impact this money is having on the very small numbers of pupils who receive this extra funding. They are diligent in ensuring safeguarding procedures are fully in place and in monitoring their continued effectiveness.

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	118592
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426668

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	JacqueO' Sullivan
Headteacher	Mandy Bridges
Date of previous school inspection	20–21 October 2010
Telephone number	01474 702312
Fax number	
Email address	office@fawkham.kent.sch.uk

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