

Geoffrey Field Junior School

Exbourne Road, Reading, RG2 8RH

Inspection dates 4–5 December 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils' attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 is improving year on year.
- Progress in mathematics across the school is outstanding. Pupils' reading skills are very well developed.
- The school is successfully closing the gaps in performance between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equally good progress as others in the school because of the good support they receive.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Most teaching is demanding, exciting and gets the best out of all pupils.
- Pupils are well behaved, eager to learn and get on with their work. They say that they feel very safe at school and that teachers give them great confidence.
- The headteacher, with strong support from his senior and subject leaders, demonstrates strong determination in his drive to ensure that all pupils succeed. He has built effective teams that have taken decisive and effective action to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement since the last inspection.
- The governors are well informed and share the ambitions of school leaders to ensure all pupils achieve the best they can.
- This is a school that makes sustained progress on its journey towards excellence.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils are making outstanding progress in their lessons and over time. The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough and there is a small minority of teaching that requires improvement.
- In some lessons, more able pupils are not challenged enough to learn at a brisk pace and teachers do not always use questions well enough to extend pupils' learning.
- Pupils' progress is not as rapid in writing as it is in reading and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 21 lessons, including two that were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and visited classrooms with senior staff to look at how well disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are learning. Inspectors also visited lessons with senior staff to look at pupils' progress in mathematics and English and at learning in a wide range of other subjects.
- Discussions were held with senior and subject leaders, staff, the Chair and four other member of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and various groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its checks on how well it is doing and planning documents, safeguarding procedures, external evaluations of its work and examples of pupils' work.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspectors to note. Parents' and pupils' responses to the school's own recent surveys, and written comments made by parents were considered. Inspectors also analysed the responses to inspection questionnaires returned by 21 staff.

Inspection team

Michael Merchant, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Olson Davies

Additional Inspector

Lesley Voaden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is of average size for a primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. About one third are from different minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest of which are pupils of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for some groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and other groups) is high.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and further accelerate pupils' progress, especially in writing, in all lessons by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons teachers make effective use of questioning to extend pupils' thinking skills and give full answers
 - making sure that all teachers expect the very best from all their pupils, and enable them to work at a brisk pace, especially the more able
 - providing more opportunities in topics for pupils to write at length.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most pupils start school in Year 3 with skills and abilities that are just below those typical for their age.
- All groups of pupils, irrespective of their varied ethnic heritages, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those who find learning a challenge, make good progress. This reflects the success of the school's commitment to ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Attainment by Year 6 is well above average in mathematics, above average in reading and broadly average in writing.
- Detailed information presented by the school provided firm evidence that all groups of pupils, including those learning to speak English as an additional language, are currently making faster progress in English and mathematics than in recent years. Pupils who attain highly at the end of Key Stage 1 make good progress overall and attain equally well at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make particularly rapid gains in mathematics and by the end of Year 6 many are working at levels over a year ahead of those expected for their age, because the school uses very effective ways to encourage all groups of pupils to become confident and proficient in their number work.
- Across the school, teachers are very aware of the need to develop pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills and they plan carefully so that they are promoted well in lessons. Well-considered and effective reading support starts in Year 3 for any pupils who need it. As a result, pupils read with increasing confidence as they move through the school and build adept communication skills.
- Achievement in writing, although good, lags behind that in mathematics and reading. This is because there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop a mature and creative flair in their writing or to produce lengthy pieces of work on a variety of themes and topics.
- School information shows that it uses its pupil premium funding very effectively to support eligible pupils. It has provided individual help and guidance, and additional tuition, as well as financial support, to enable them to participate in out-of-school activities and courses. This support has effectively reduced the attainment gap between these pupils and others across all years, so that it is narrower than that seen nationally.
- Careful attention is paid to ensuring that the needs of all are met and this enhances the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Well-targeted support for these pupils enables them to overcome many of their personal challenges and make the same good progress as their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has many strengths and school records show that it is getting better each year. Teachers expect much of their pupils and there is a very positive climate that encourages good learning in the school. As a result pupils of all abilities achieve well in English and mathematics.
- The school has maintained and built upon the good-quality teaching seen at the last inspection because school leaders give strong attention to improving teaching and learning through well-planned training for staff.
- Teachers have good relationships with the class and make judicious use of praise and encouragement to keep pupils motivated and to boost their self-confidence.
- Most lessons are fast paced and lively. Teachers typically expect a lot out of pupils, both in terms of their work rate and in intellectual demand. Teachers and other adults work very well together in partnerships in classes and plan lessons well together to ensure that pupils are given work that will enable everyone to do their best.

- Pupils respond with eagerness and enthusiasm and soak up learning, especially when they are actively involved in lessons. They relish working in groups and readily cooperate and share ideas, and so learn well from each other.
- Many examples were seen of teaching which enthused pupils to learn actively. In a lively Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils energetically worked together to find examples of how the concepts 'mode', 'median' and 'mean' can be used in everyday life to help organise information. The teacher expected a lot of them as learners, gave lively explanations, asked sharp, probing questions and encouraged pupils' curiosity, which enabled all groups to make exceptional progress.
- Teachers give strong and helpful advice to pupils, both in the comments they write when marking pupils' books, or when discussing their work with them in class. This gives pupils a very clear indication of how they can improve their work and sets them additional challenges to follow up.
- Where teaching falls short of outstanding, the pace of learning is slower and the more able pupils are not always challenged as much as they could be. This holds them back from making even faster progress. The lack of opportunities to write creatively and at length also hampers some pupils from developing their writing skills to the full.
- Although most teachers use questions very well to encourage pupils to think and debate their work with others, this is not always the case. Occasionally, questions are not used as well as they could be to probe pupils' understanding and to prompt them to fully explain their answers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and are polite and friendly towards each other, to staff and to visitors.
- Pupils enjoy school and develop very well as articulate, courteous and considerate young people, extremely well aware of how to lead safe and healthy lives and become highly successful learners.
- Pupils' great enjoyment of school is shown in their ever-improving attendance, which is above average. Most pupils attend punctually every day.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well provided for. Pupils respect each other and the school. Pupils from different social and ethnic backgrounds get along harmoniously together. They offer thoughtful responses when given the opportunity to reflect on spiritual or moral issues during lessons. They show great respect for, and interest in, the views of others.
- Systems to manage any inappropriate behaviour are very well understood by pupils and consistently applied by staff. Exclusions are rare.
- Pupils are very sure that there is no bullying. They know about different forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying. They know that some internet sites are not safe. Equally, they know that adults will help them should they have any concerns. Pupils are also very definite that there is no racism and no discrimination based on race or gender.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils are sometimes passive and over-reliant on the teacher in a few lessons and a very small minority occasionally misbehave when the work is not demanding, which occasionally spoils the learning and enjoyment of others.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's clear and unwavering vision for the school is completely supported and implemented by all staff. He communicates his high expectations persuasively so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team.
- The headteacher has been highly active in local partnerships with other schools to support and promote best practice.
- He is supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team and by

middle leaders and other staff who are committed to ongoing improvement. Consequently, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress is good and accelerating.

- The senior team checks the quality of teaching rigorously. They use their excellent coaching and mentoring skills to offer constructive advice and training and use their highly effective teachers very well to extend and share good practice with other colleagues. In this way, the quality of teaching and learning is going from strength to strength.
- The headteacher has ensured that there are secure procedures in place to make sure that teachers are accountable for their performance. Staff are not allowed to be rewarded financially unless they are successful in helping all pupils in their class make at least good progress.
- Pupils are given challenging academic targets that have raised their ambitions. Leaders at all levels make good use of information on pupils' progress to check any slowing down. Checks are followed up swiftly with well-thought-out support that helps pupils who fall behind to catch up.
- Pupils enjoy very many opportunities to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, particularly through the exciting 'University Wednesdays' where pupils eagerly 'sign up' to a varied and stimulating range of courses. A particular strength of the school is the way in which it is developing pupils' interest in and aptitude for a very wide range of sporting activities.
- The primary sport funding is being used very effectively to build on the high quality and great breadth of physical education and sports provision. The range of after-school sports clubs has been further extended and specialist sports coaches employed to improve pupils' expertise in different sporting activities. Pupils' participation in sporting activities across the school is high.
- The local authority has provided a balance of challenge and support to help the school improve.
- Leadership is not yet outstanding because the drive of leaders to ensure excellence has not yet resulted in a high enough proportion of outstanding teaching. Consequently, although pupils' progress is good, not enough make rapid progress across all year groups and subjects over time.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body brings a wide range of expertise to the school. Governors have a good understanding of and take a keen interest in the way the school works. They rigorously check to make sure that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all current requirements and that the school puts in place the correct procedures if an incident occurs. Governors have a good understanding of how teachers' performance and teachers' pay are managed. They closely monitor the school's budget, including the spending of money from the pupil premium, and are active in seeking ways to solve problems. All governors receive regular training. They receive clear information on how well different groups of pupils achieve to make sure that no group does less well than any others, and compare the results to those achieved in similar schools and nationally. The governing body is effective in holding the headteacher and senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance.

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	109781
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	426566

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	295
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Busk
Headteacher	Charlie Clare
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2008
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