

Coombe Hill Infants School

Coombe Lane West, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 7DD

Inspection dates 4–5 December 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 2, in 2013, pupils reached standards that were above national expectations in all subjects.
- The headteacher knows the school well and provides strong leadership. Teachers' performance is well managed to ensure that teaching and learning are good or better.
- Teachers explain things clearly and pupils learn at a good pace in a very stimulating learning environment.
- All groups of pupils make good progress in their learning, including the most able. Good support from teachers and skilled teaching assistants ensures that pupils learning to speak English as an additional language and those supported by the pupil premium grant achieve well.
- The teaching of phonics (linking sounds with letters) has improved significantly and pupils are confident in using these skills in reading.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils love learning and respond quickly in lessons. They are very well cared for and feel safe. They play and work together very well and enjoy the responsibilities they have in school.
- The curriculum is well planned and is a strength of the school. It provides exciting topics for pupils to learn about and supports their social and moral development very well. There is a lot of extra support for reading. Music, art and drama are a strong focus which the pupils enjoy.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school and praise highly the work of the teachers and the wide range of opportunities their children have.
- The governing body supports the school very well and ensures that finances are effectively managed. The governors are actively engaged with all aspects of school life and know the actions being taken to improve the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not sufficient teaching that is consistently outstanding to ensure that all pupils make rapid progress in their learning.
- Leaders at all levels do not have sufficient information about the progress that pupils make to inform all the decisions they take.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons of which two were conducted jointly with senior leaders. In addition, they made shorter visits to lessons to focus on specific aspects. They listened to pupils reading and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, staff and groups of pupils.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's own performance data, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, governing body minutes and notes of visits and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspectors took account of the 31 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- The views of parents and carers were sought at the beginning of the school day and the inspection team took account of 83 responses from Parent View, the Ofsted online survey.

Inspection team

Peter Nathan, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Deidre Crutchley	Additional Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and pupils with a parent or carer in the armed forces.
- The proportion of pupils who are of minority ethnic heritage is well above average: more than half the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- A new headteacher took up post in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and improve pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that there is a consistently high level of challenge and engagement in learning in all lessons
 - ensuring that pupil progress information is fully used by leaders and teachers so that all learning activities provide maximum benefit for pupils
 - sharing best practice within the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception classes with skills and experiences that are typical for their age. They make excellent progress with their personal and social development and good progress overall, due to the good teaching, the stimulating learning environment and the care they receive. By the time they leave Reception, most children reach a good level of development with many exceeding this level. This means that most pupils develop the level of skills, knowledge and understanding needed for the next phase of their learning.
- Consistently good or better teaching, highly effective use of support staff and extra teaching sessions have ensured that the standards of attainment of all pupils, including the more able, at the end of Year 2 were well above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This has been the case since the last inspection.
- Leaders have been successful in meeting the needs of pupils who come to school at the early stages of learning English. By the end of Year 2, these pupils reach standards that are above national expectations because of the individual and group support they receive from the school's specialist team.
- Parents and carers are highly appreciative of the way in which the school and individual staff go out of their way to help pupils when they need it so that they can learn well. This, together with a strong partnership with parents and carers, for example around homework, has had a positive impact on raising standards. This is particularly true for pupils with special educational needs who attain better than similar pupils nationally.
- Following the below average results in the 2012 national phonics (the sounds that letters make) check, the school has taken effective action to improve pupils' progress in this area. Phonics is now systematically taught throughout the school, with all staff well trained, which has led to above average results in 2013.
- School leaders and teachers make sure that individual pupils are monitored to ensure that they make good progress in their learning. Progress is not outstanding, however, because teachers and leaders do not always know which are the most effective ways to ensure outstanding learning. This is because the school does not effectively monitor overall pupil progress or for different groups of pupils.
- Progress in reading and writing is good and pupils say they really enjoy reading and using the school library which contains many computers to support learning. Before school starts, many pupils have one-to-one reading support from teachers and work on reading programmes on the computers which support their progress. The pupils take great pride in their topic books and their record books which show evidence of the good progress they make in their writing.
- Pupils develop excellent skills in their speaking and listening, as was observed in lessons and around school. This due to the high level of engagement with adults, the creative approach to teaching with the use of drama and music including singing, and the use of speaking to support reading and writing.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals benefit from a range of activities to support their learning and they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They can also access after-school clubs, such as drama, to support the development of their speaking and listening skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good, and some is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and are very committed to making sure that pupils succeed. For example, at the start of the day, teachers are always available to talk to pupils and their parents or carers about their work and how to improve it. They have good subject knowledge and this is clear from the way that questioning deepens understanding and any misunderstandings are clarified.

Relationships with pupils are excellent which mean that pupils want to do their best and try hard. This means that pupils make good progress, with some pupils making excellent progress.

- Teaching in the Reception classes is consistently good, with some outstanding practice. Curriculum activities are well planned and this ensures that children really delight in their learning. For example, children talked excitedly about a 'bear hunt' they had been on in the outside area which led to the learning of a lot of new vocabulary.
- Activities in lessons are usually purposeful and interesting and sustain pupils' learning. Teachers use creative ways of stimulating pupils' learning, but sometimes the pace of learning is too slow and pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.
- The teaching of phonics is much improved because it is taught every day in fun and engaging sessions and is well planned to make sure children make good progress. Pupils who need extra help are well supported through extra phonics and reading sessions before school. There is a real buzz of activity before the formal start of the school day in these extra learning sessions.
- Teaching assistants play a central role in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs, pupils eligible for free school meals and those who need additional support with their learning make good, or in some cases outstanding, progress in their learning. They work well in the classroom with small groups of pupils and in one-to-one teaching sessions to support mathematics, reading and writing.
- The school has a teaching team which provides excellent support for pupils learning English as an additional language. Teaching assistants develop these pupils' spoken language well using some high quality resources. The use of drama pictures, photos and videos in lessons helps these pupils develop their understanding of language quickly. For example, in several lessons seen about *The Nutcracker*, lots of beautiful pictures of the story were used to help pupils tell the story again. This resulted in a wonderful puppet theatre production of the story told by the pupils.
- All the parents spoken to believe that their children are taught well and they like the homework the children receive. The enthusiasm of children for school was commented on by a number of parents, with one saying her child really missed school during the school holidays.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is outstanding. Pupils clearly want to do their best for their teachers and they usually demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils' ability to concentrate for long periods of time showed their growing maturity and love of learning.
- In Reception classes, all staff encourage children to share, take turns and work together, and children respond to this well. In Key Stage 1, pupils show consideration for each other and their conduct and manners are usually impeccable. School prefects and school council members wear their lanyards with pride, while members of the SOS (sort out squabbles) team help pupils sort out any differences they may have with each other. This teaches pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour themselves.
- Pupils cooperate well together in lessons in pair and group work and support each other's learning well. They really enjoy the opportunity to take part in role play, engage in drama activities and join in with all learning.
- Pupils are aware of different kinds of bullying, although this is a rare occurrence in this school. Adults model high standards of behaviour and this is reflected in the high standards of pupil behaviour. When pupils join the school, they become one of 45 cross year group families, with the older pupils supporting the younger ones. This helps create a strong community ethos and harmonious learning environment.
- Pupils have a strong awareness of right and wrong because the school promotes moral and social development very well. Assemblies are used well to focus on the school's 'golden rules', with one assembly seen focusing on how important it is to be kind. Music is used well in assemblies to reinforce this, for example through a school song called Coombe Hill Hands. Pupils

have an outstanding awareness of their own and others' cultural identity, which is celebrated by the school through displays and through school events such as the recent international fortnight. This event brought together the whole school community through a range of workshops and other events.

- Pupils love coming to school and attendance is above average, while punctuality is excellent. Many pupils come to school early because of the range of learning activities offered and then stay late to take part in the wide variety of clubs. The school has systems in place to encourage attendance, if needed.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and their parents agree that this is a very happy, safe school. Pupils know how to play safely using playground equipment and have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe using computers as appropriate to their age.

The leadership and management is good

- School leaders and governors are very ambitious for the school. They have a clear understanding of the many strengths of the school and they have plans in place for further improvement. They have an uncompromising commitment to the high level of care that the school provides and to raising levels of achievement.
- The new headteacher already knows her school well and her own evaluation of teaching is accurate. School leaders are highly focused on continuous improvement in teaching and learning, and support for newly qualified teachers and those at an early stage of their teaching careers is excellent. The school's performance management system is good and fully supports teaching improvement.
- All school leaders, including middle managers, lead by example. They are often outstanding teachers themselves and give extra time to support staff, work with pupils and meet with parents. Individual pupil progress is closely monitored through termly or more frequent meetings. However, leaders do not have a complete overview of the progress that pupils or groups of pupils make in their learning. There has been a reliance on external information which has provided information on attainment but not on progress.
- The curriculum provides an excellent, exciting and wide range of learning opportunities for pupils. It ensures that reading, writing and mathematics are very well covered, with a lot of extra support for those children who need it before, during and after school. Creative learning is at the heart of the school, with wonderful opportunities for pupils to develop skills in art and music. Pupils are regularly involved in performances at the local theatre and church. The library is very well used, as are the computers located in the library area. The curriculum is enriched by the trips the pupils go on and by the extensive range of clubs offered after school, including sports activities. This means that pupils have a joy in their learning and a thirst for more.
- The school has an excellent partnership with parents and carers and many spoken to were very pleased with the school, with one saying the school 'couldn't do more for the children'. Leaders have listened to parents' and carers' views about homework which is now in place. Regular meetings are held with parents and carers to discuss pupils' learning and the school provides curriculum workshops to help them understand what and how the school teaches.
- The school has plans in place on how it will use the new school sport funding to increase the wide range of opportunities that pupils have to take part in physical education and sports activities. This has already included the funding of specialist sports coaches, for example for karate.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support for this school and has an accurate view of what the school needs to do to improve. It has supported the improvements in teaching and the curriculum, with teachers attending relevant courses. One teacher spoke highly enthusiastically about a recent science course attended. Some of the data provided to the school by the local authority on pupil outcomes, however, was not accurate.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors know about the standards that pupils are achieving in the school and how well the school is doing compared to all schools nationally. They are very engaged with the school and make frequent visits, looking at subject areas and other parts of school life. They have recently been involved in the appointment of the new headteacher and also in numerous meetings about the possible expansion of the school. They have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching in the school and other improvements, through reports from the headteacher and from their involvement in the performance management process. They understand how pupil progress is linked to salary progression, but do not have full information on the progress that pupils make in their learning because this has not been previously provided by the school leaders. They do know though that this is a school priority and they are clear about the steps that the school needs to take to improve further. Governors ensure that statutory duties are met and that financial resources are managed well. For example, they know how many pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, what the funding is spent on and the impact in terms of attainment when these pupils leave the school.
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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	102567
Local authority	Kingston
Inspection number	427228

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Farideh Camyab
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Berry
Date of previous school inspection	15 July 2008
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