

Shinfield St Mary's C of E VA Junior School

Chestnut Crescent, Shinfield, Reading, RG2 9EJ

Inspection dates 12–13 December 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.

- Since the previous inspection, improvements have continued. Teaching is now consistently good and some is outstanding.
- Pupils learn well and all groups make good progress, particularly in reading, writing and more recently in mathematics. Their achievement is good. Standards are slightly above average and continuing to rise.
- The focus on making sure that pupils have secure knowledge of mental mathematics has helped to improve progress in mathematics.
- Teachers share ideas about best practice in teaching, and how to make the topics they cover interesting and engaging for all pupils.
- Marking is a strength of the school and pupils regularly respond to the comments teachers make in their books.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy the work they are given to do. Attendance is above average.
- The good security arrangements and caring adults mean that pupils feel very safe at school. They are well trained about how they can help keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher has developed a strong team of leaders and managers, who share the vision for the school and increasingly take responsibility for bringing about improvements. She leads by example.
- Senior leaders and members of the governing body make sure that statutory requirements are met, particularly for keeping pupils safe.
- Members of the governing body challenge and support the school well because they have an accurate view about the work of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Not all teachers probe pupils' understanding or adapt the tasks or the explanations they give pupils quickly enough.
- The opportunities for pupils to develop information and communication technology skills within their wider work are limited.
- Pupils sometimes need reminders about how much work they should complete, or to produce their very best work. At times pupils rely too much on the teachers to tell them what they need to do next in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- One inspector visited the school for two days for this inspection. He observed 12 lessons, taught by six teachers. Sessions led by teaching assistants were also observed. About half of the observations were undertaken together with the headteacher.
- The inspector reviewed the work of the school, through a wide range of documents, teachers' records about the performance of pupils, meetings with pupils, staff and governors, and the school's policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. The inspector also considered minutes from meetings, external reports about the school and plans to bring about further improvements. He spoke to governors about their role and effectiveness.
- The inspector spoke to a group of pupils, as well as talking to pupils during their lessons and at break times, to gather their views about their teachers, their learning and how well they are doing. He also spoke to parents informally before and after school, and considered the 18 responses to the online survey for Ofsted, Parent View. Staff responses to a separate survey were also reviewed.
- During the inspection, pupils in Year 3 and 4 presented their annual Christmas Nativity play for parents and visitors.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than average, with two classes in most year groups. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes in some lessons.
- Most pupils are White British. Other pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is slightly below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is average. This additional funding is provided by the government to improve the achievement of particular groups of pupils, including those who are known to have been eligible for free school meals, children of parents serving in the armed forces, and children looked after by the local authority. The school currently has no pupils in the latter category.
- The school meets the floor targets, the minimum standards for attainment and progress set by the government in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that even more teaching is outstanding so that pupils make rapid progress, by:
 - developing with pupils a greater sense of urgency about the quality and quantity of work they do in each lesson
 - using probing questions to check how well pupils have understood, and adapting the lesson more quickly in the light of this
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to choose to use information and communication technology to do their work and develop their skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Progress is now consistent across year groups and subjects and, as a result, standards at the end of Year 6 have continued to rise. In 2013, pupils in Year 6 reached standards which were slightly above average. Pupils currently in Year 6 are already on track to reach standards which are even higher. From their starting points, this shows that they have made good progress.
- When they join the school in Year 3, pupils typically arrive with average standards, although this is gradually rising.
- Almost all pupils make the expected progress, and the proportion who make more than the expected progress is average, but increasing. Pupils who are more able are challenged well by the work they are given to do and increasingly work at the highest levels. Work in their books shows that this good progress is typical.
- The focus on improving the teaching of mathematics and writing has been successful. Standards in reading have previously been well above average, and pupils are confident readers who enjoy a wide range of the books available. However, in 2013, standards in reading were not quite as high as previously. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to reach higher standards in reading again. A good emphasis on teaching phonics (the linking of letters and the sounds they make) means pupils feel confident tackling challenging words.
- In mathematics, teachers make sure that pupils get good opportunities to develop their mental mathematics skills each day. As a result, pupils feel confident using their times-tables when working on mental calculations. Parents said they feel well informed about how they can help their children with this.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants, who have a good understanding of their needs. Adults ensure that this support does not detract from their learning in lessons, but helps these pupils to close the gaps in their knowledge and skills. As a result, they make good progress.
- Pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium benefit from additional help from teachers and teaching assistants during lessons and through working in small groups. Consequently they make good progress and in 2013, these pupils reached standards which were above those of other pupils, particularly in reading and writing, where they were about six months ahead of other pupils. In mathematics, they reached standards which were in line with those of other pupils.
- Pupils from other different backgrounds all make similar progress. While the standards reached by boys in 2013 were below those of girls, this reflects the particular needs of the pupils in this group. Learning observed during the inspection, as well as the data about other year groups, show that boys and girls typically make similar progress because the work they are given to do is engaging and appropriately challenging.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers know a lot about the skills and knowledge of each pupil and carefully plan lessons to challenge them. The systems to gather and analyse data about the progress of pupils are well established and give the teachers a helpful indication of which pupils need extra support or further challenge.
- In most lessons, pupils are well motivated and work hard. Very occasionally, pupils work at a leisurely pace and lack a sense of urgency about how much work they will complete during a lesson, and are not always as determined as they could be to produce their very best work.
- Teachers work well as a team, helping each other to develop their skills. Teachers who have responsibility for leading aspects of the school, such as the main subjects, regularly check teachers' plans and make helpful suggestions to improve them. They provide an example of the

best practice within their areas. As a result, writing and mathematics have improved.

- There are very positive relationships between the teachers and pupils, with a great deal of mutual respect. Teachers make sure that the work they have planned for pupils to do is interesting, and deliver these lessons with great passion and energy. For example, during an exciting English lesson, a teacher playing the role of Henry VIII enthralled Year 3 and 4 pupils, motivating them to write excellent poetry, so that 'heads will not have to roll!'
- There has been a focus on using good questioning skills to check pupils' learning and most teachers use these effectively. However, there remain a few occasions when these probing questions are not used as well as they could be, to inform how the rest of the lesson proceeds. A very few teachers do not always have the confidence to adapt the tasks the pupils are doing, or to change the explanations they give the pupils.
- Teachers make sure that pupils have got a range of targets to aim for, so that they know what they need to do next in their learning. These are readily available and pupils know what these targets are. Most pupils get the opportunity to contribute their views about how well they are making progress towards achieving these targets. In a very few classes, these opportunities are not as well developed, and sometimes these pupils rely too much on the teacher when completing work.
- Teachers make sure that pupils receive helpful comments about their work, both verbally and written in their books. This has been a focus for development, and has become a strength of the school. Pupils appreciate this input about how to improve and typically respond to the comments so that there is an on-going dialogue between the teacher and pupil which helps to consolidate pupils' progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are very well informed about the particular needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The school has good partnerships with others to ensure that specific needs are carefully identified and appropriate support provided, either within the school or through other professionals.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils love being at the school and are proud to be part of such a positive community. They say that the teachers make their learning fun, and that the work they are given is almost always just hard enough.
- They get along very well during their free time, and require only very light supervision. The 'playground pals' help to make sure pupils have someone to play with and help sort out any minor disagreements.
- Pupils particularly like the practical tasks they are given to do, for example in science and mathematics lessons, and when they are given extra challenges to do. However, in a few lessons some pupils work at a leisurely pace and are not always determined enough to do their very best work.
- During lessons, pupils are mostly very well behaved and keen to get on with the work they are given to do. There are a very few pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and find it a challenge to keep within the expectations of the school. However, these pupils are very well supported by caring, knowledgeable adults and their behaviour is not allowed to disrupt the learning of others. Other pupils are very understanding about the difficulties these pupils face and help to remind them what they should do.
- Pupils feel safe in the school because of the good security and caring adults. They know that there is always someone they can talk to if they have any worries and that these will be dealt with quickly. Pupils know a lot about how they can keep themselves safe, for example when riding bicycles or when using the internet.
- Pupils said that bullying might have happened a long time ago, but that it would not happen now because the school, and they themselves, have 'zero tolerance' for any name-calling or unkindness. They know the 'golden rules' well and feel that teachers and other adults help them

to be the best they can be.

The leadership and management are good

- The key issues at the previous inspection have been soundly addressed: teaching is now consistently good; the tracking systems are well established and provide accurate information about pupils' progress, and the role of leaders and managers across the school is now effective in leading improvements.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has ensured that there is a strong, compelling vision for providing high-quality opportunities for learning, so that every pupil, whatever their background, has an equal opportunity to succeed and there is no discrimination. Parents, pupils and staff agree that her leadership is inspirational.
- Together with other leaders across the school, the headteacher checks the quality of teaching, giving each teacher accurate, helpful feedback so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve. While teaching is not yet outstanding overall, this is becoming more frequent.
- The curriculum gives pupils good opportunities to develop their reading, writing, mathematical and communication skills, particularly providing them with rich experiences on which to base their writing. Teachers make good use of the technology that is available, particularly in their classrooms. However, pupils have only limited opportunities to develop their skills or use information and communication technology for their other work as a matter of course, or when they feel it might be beneficial, because the resources are not readily available.
- The school has developed very good support for parents, so that they are well informed about how to best help their children's learning. For example, parents attend sessions to help them understand how children learn to read, or the practicalities of helping with mathematics.
- The assemblies help pupils think deeply about spiritual matters and the world around them. These are well planned and help to promote the school's 'golden rules'. Excellent opportunities to sing or play instruments, dance or do drama all contribute well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- Senior leaders make sure that all the requirements for keeping pupils safe are met. The buildings and environment are well maintained and well decorated. Colourful, exciting displays celebrate the work pupils do, and how they have improved.
- The local authority has supported the school well in their journey out of special measures, to satisfactory and now on to being a good school. Support has reduced greatly as the school's confidence and capacity have improved and the local authority now needs only to keep a light finger on the pulse of the school's performance.
- Improvements have been so strong that the school now supports other schools, in using data effectively to improve pupils' learning, in supporting pupils eligible for the pupil premium, and in developing the highest quality of teaching in physical education. The latter resulted in an award for 'Physical Education Teacher of the Year' across the area. The pupils have highly positive attitudes towards sports and staying healthy.
- The continued rise in the performance of the pupils, as well as the shared leadership across the school, give great confidence to the capacity of the school to keep improving further. Strategic plans demonstrate the ambitious vision for the school's future.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are well informed because they get plenty of information from the headteacher and other senior leaders. They check the accuracy of this information through their own activities, including the time they spend in the school and their discussions with pupils, staff and parents. Governors make sure that they are well trained to understand what the data show about the performance of the school in relation to that of other schools, and that they keep up to date with statutory requirements, including those for keeping pupils safe.
 - Governors and senior leaders work together to make sure that the finances of the school are managed carefully and used well for the purposes intended. They use the information they

have about the quality of teaching to consider carefully any pay awards, to ensure that teachers who have additional allowances are meeting the standards for this. They keep track of the achievement of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, and have further plans to make good use of the additional funding to improve the teaching of physical education and promote pupils' healthy lifestyles.

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	109976
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	426420

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Taylor
Headteacher	Clare Wagstaff
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 November 2011
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