

Lavendon School

High Street, Lavendon, Olney, MK46 4HA

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership. Her expectations for the school are extremely high and are shared by senior staff, teachers and teaching assistants, pupils, members of the governing body and parents and carers.
- Governors too have exceptional knowledge of how well the school is performing and the high quality of teaching and learning. They challenge the school leadership robustly and generate ideas of their own for school improvement.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make excellent progress during their time at the school and leave with standards which are above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The majority of teaching is also outstanding. It caters well for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented.
- The school's outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpins pupils' exemplary attitudes towards learning and their impeccable behaviour. Pupils state very clearly that there is no bullying and incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare.
- Pupils in Reception make excellent progress from low starting points because the staff are extremely skilled at planning work at the right level and adjusting it where necessary during the teaching sessions. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning, which has just the right balance of different activities.
- The thematic curriculum stimulates real interest within the pupils themselves. It is highly imaginative and subjects and topics are taught successfully to meet the needs of all pupils. The school not only stretches all pupils academically, but also across a wide range of exciting activities during their enrichment time.
- Pupils feel extremely safe at school and clearly enjoy all aspects of school life, as shown by their exceptionally high attendance.
- Parents and carers are full of praise for the school. They commend the leadership, the quality of teaching, safety and the way in which the children are cared for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons, four of which were joint observations with the headteacher. He also observed the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds combinations and the sounds they make) and heard pupils from Years 1 and 2 read. In addition, the inspector met with pupils to discuss the school and their work and examined their books.
- A wide range of school documentation was analysed and evaluated including that relating to safeguarding, assessing pupils' progress, school development plans, governors' meeting minutes and monitoring records.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and senior member of staff responsible for mathematics, pupils, members of the governing body and the local authority representative. In addition, the inspector also met with a number of parents and carers informally at the start of the school day.
- The 39 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were also analysed as well as the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Graeme Burgess, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Lavendon School is much smaller than most primary schools. The current headteacher took up post in January 2012 and the governing body has recently created a new post for an assistant headteacher.
- There are five classes in the school, four of which have pupils of different ages. Children in Reception are taught as one class.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is much lower than in most other schools. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than in most other schools.
- Only a very few pupils are supported by the pupil premium. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families.
- The pupils who attend the school are mainly White British.
- The headteacher is supporting the local pre-school in order to raise the levels that pupils are achieving prior to joining the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the partnership with the pre-school so that children have a smooth transition into Reception.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children's skills on entry are typically less well developed than those in other schools. Nevertheless, all children make outstanding progress and by the time they leave Reception there are no longer any children who are significantly below age-related expectations. In fact, in reading and mathematics a significant proportion of pupils either achieves, or exceeds, age-related expectations, having begun with very low starting points.
- Excellent progress continues through Years 1 and 2 as pupils make significant gains in their learning. As a result, attainment over the last three years at the end of Key Stage 1 has been significantly above the national average. School tracking data show that pupils in the current Year 2 are working at similar high levels.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 has also been higher than the national averages over a number of years. In addition, pupils who left school at the end of Year 6 in 2012 and 2013 made better progress from their starting points than is typical nationally.
- Pupils in other year groups also make rapid progress, especially in reading. This is because the school makes excellent use of the local library service to instil a love for reading and promotes reading regularly in class. It also encourages children to bring books from home and teachers check children's reading regularly. As a result, pupils can talk confidently about their favourite authors and the type of books they enjoy reading the most.
- The more able pupils make accelerated progress in all areas, especially in writing, and achieve particularly high standards. The fairly recently introduced thematic curriculum makes links between different subjects and provides pupils with a real purpose for their writing. For example, children in Year 6 talk about how they make their own chocolate bars and visit Cadbury World as part of a thematic approach to their learning and say that they 'love to write about it' as a result.
- In addition, the school provides the pupils with wider opportunities which prepare them well for the next stage in their learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 are expected to develop fund raising ideas to support the cost of their school trips and therefore raise money through cake sales and games. Pupils can talk with real knowledge about the amount of money raised and how it was spent.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make excellent progress. This is because the school identifies pupils who need extra support quickly and then ensures that they get whatever they need in order to help them to do their very best.
- The number of pupils in the school who are eligible for pupil premium funding is very low. Pupil premium funding is used well to support individual pupils to achieve well. Their progress is meticulously tracked.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and who met with the inspector at the start of the school day are overwhelmingly positive about the progress that their children make in school.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress in all year groups as a result of high-quality teaching which is mostly outstanding.
- Teaching at Lavendon is characterised by well-planned lessons with activities which are adapted quickly during the lesson to meet the needs of the pupils. For example, in Reception the teacher moved the children on rapidly from their starting point, of counting pennies, to a number sentence which involved converting 11 pence into one 10 pence and one penny.
- Teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. They check pupils' understanding regularly and then use their extensive subject knowledge to redirect learning in order to extend pupils' understanding more quickly.
- Teachers' planning takes into account all groups of pupils. As a result, the support for pupils who

are eligible for the pupil premium, as well as for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is carefully targeted so that they make excellent progress.

- Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers and are organised and extremely effective. They are very skilled at asking questions and rephrasing information. Consequently, they provide highly effective support and make sure that all pupils make progress towards their learning targets.
- Teachers help pupils to become enthusiastic about their learning by encouraging them to identify what they and their peers have done well, and what aspects of work could be improved further.
- Teachers' marking provides clear next steps for learning. Pupils and parents and carers say that the way the books are marked is really helpful in knowing what the children need to do next in order to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is the case in lessons, in corridors, in the dinner hall and at break time. The school's records regarding behaviour show that behaviour has been outstanding over an extended period of time and has been maintained since the previous inspection.
- Parents and carers who expressed views of the school are overwhelmingly positive about behaviour, safety and the amount of enjoyment that the pupils get from coming to school. One parent or carer said, 'My son is so keen to come to school that he puts his uniform on ready, on Sunday night!'
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are exemplary. They display a real eagerness to learn and very much enjoy their lessons. In fact, in one Reception lesson, a pupil returning to the main lesson entered the classroom with a definite glow and determination to be part of the teaching activity and was welcomed into the circle by others who moved to make room for him. All pupils immerse themselves into their lessons, asking thoughtful questions. This helps to deepen their understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are extremely polite and helpful and are very proud of their school. This is reflected in their high attendance over a sustained period of time.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils can talk knowledgeably about all aspects of safety. They know about how to keep safe on the internet and about the risks of using mobile phones, social networking sites and chat rooms; they know what constitutes bullying and speak about the fact that they can go to any member of staff, including lunchtime supervisors, if they have a difficulty and that it will be 'sorted out' quickly; they know how to keep safe around the building and have regular fire alarm practices.
- Governors have led work on 'Restorative Justice' and this has had a real impact on the mature way with which pupils are able to deal with any relationship difficulties that may arise.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher sets particularly high standards and these are shared at all levels by the staff and the governing body, which make for a highly impressive team. There is a tremendous team spirit and each member of staff is extremely ambitious and totally committed to continual improvement.
- Since her appointment in January 2012, the headteacher has provided carefully selected training to enable staff to be highly effective. Professional targets are robust and have been very effective in helping staff to hone their teaching and leadership skills so that provision is of the highest quality. Regular pupil progress meetings are held to ensure that all pupils are learning

well.

- There have been regular improvements in teaching, learning and achievement which demonstrate the school's excellent capacity for further improvement.
- The headteacher has also significantly improved the nature and appearance of the school's accommodation and has begun to work with the local pre-school to ensure a smooth transition for pupils into Reception.
- Simple changes to the timings of break times for the older and the younger children have been highly effective in helping pupils to do better. For example, pupils in Reception, Years 1 and 2 are split into seven phonics groups and taught in Key Stage 2 classrooms while the older children are out at play. This means that the needs of pupils can be better met and that they can, as a result, make more rapid progress.
- The school's views of its own performance are rigorous and robust and school improvement plans identify clearly what needs to be done next to improve the school further.
- The local authority offers light-touch support which is nevertheless highly effective.
- The exciting and stimulating subjects and topics studied through the thematic curriculum enthuse and motivate the children by offering rich opportunities for high-quality learning. These include, for example, opportunities to use mathematical calculations to estimate the age of an inhabitant of Jupiter during the science topic on space.
- All pupils have access to a wide variety of activities that the school offers them during an enrichment hour at the end of the school week and during after-school clubs. For example, pupils have the opportunity to get involved in sewing, bible and newspaper clubs. These activities contribute extremely well to their academic achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is using its primary sports funding effectively to improve provision for sport and to impact on pupils' health and well-being. For example, Lavendon and other local schools have pooled their financial resources to release a lead teacher of physical education from the local junior school to teach physical education lessons. Members of the school staff are able to observe these lessons in order to develop their own teaching skills.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to help pupils at risk of underachieving to succeed. In addition, pupils who are on the special educational needs register are tracked closely and targeted intervention is tailored to match their needs.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and what it is doing to improve further. Governors know about pupils' progress and challenge the headteacher regularly regarding pupils' achievement. They undergo regular training to sharpen their skills and are confident both to support and challenge the school. They monitor the finances of the school rigorously and are forward thinking with regard to making changes to the staffing structure in anticipation of future growth in the number of pupils that may attend the school.
- Governors are extremely vigilant in making sure that the school is a safe place and that everyone connected with the school is suitably checked and that staff and governors are trained in child protection matters. They check the quality of teaching by asking information which shows how much progress is being made by different groups of children, and have introduced the 'Restorative Justice' programme which has further improved the already high standards of pupils' behaviour. Rigorous systems are in place to check teachers' performance and make decisions about salary increases and governors review targets for the headteacher. The governing body has a wealth of skills and expertise which are being used very effectively.

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	110242
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	432082

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Bev Shaw
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Ryan
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
Telephone number	01234 712680
Email address	lavendon@milton-keynes.gov.uk

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