

# Kennet Valley Primary School

Carters Rise, Calcot, Reading, RG31 7YT

**Inspection dates** 30–31 January 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Require improvement	3
Leadership and management		Require improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This school requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because the quality of teaching is too variable and not enough of it is good or outstanding.
- The work teachers set is sometimes too easy or too hard for the pupils. Questions asked by teachers do not always extend pupils' learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are not good enough, especially where teaching is not sufficiently challenging.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to write at length in English or to use their skills in mathematics across other subjects.
- The teaching of phonics (sounds that letters make) is not consistent across the school. As a result, some pupils do not make rapid enough progress in learning to read.
- Teachers do not always make good use of teaching assistants to support learning.
- Marking and the use of targets do not always help pupils to understand clearly what they must do to improve their work.
- Leaders and managers, at all levels, are not rigorous enough in checking the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that it is always good or better. Leaders in charge of subjects are not fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning.
- Plans for school improvement are not sharp enough to help leaders check the impact of their actions on pupils' achievements.
- Governors do not challenge leaders well enough about the school's performance and pupil premium spending is not checked carefully to make sure that it is improving pupils' achievement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Good provision is made for children in the Reception class and they make good progress as a result.
- Teachers and adults ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for.
- A good range of activities promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Senior leaders are now working to make sure that achievement and teaching are improving.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 13 lessons and/or parts of lessons. Approximately a third were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The inspectors also observed pupils being taught in small groups and listened to pupils from different year groups reading.
- Discussions were held with a range of pupils, the headteacher and other senior leaders, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of 38 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and discussions were held with a small number of parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's data about pupils' current progress. In addition, the inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence, including wall displays, the school's website and evidence on the school's wider achievements beyond the classroom.

## Inspection team

Sonja Joseph Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Theresa Hill

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional government funding for particular groups, such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and children from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics and English.
- There has been significant staff turnover and long-term staff absence since the previous inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2013.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
  - pupils' work is always set at the right level of difficulty, including for the more able pupils, so that they can quickly progress to the next level
  - questioning is used consistently well in all classes to extend pupils' learning
  - target setting and high quality marking help all pupils understand clearly what they need to do to improve their work so that they make rapid gains in their learning
  - teaching assistants are given sufficient direction to support pupils' learning so they learn at a faster pace
  - teaching engages and motivates pupils so that they have positive attitudes to learning and always sustain good behaviour in lessons.
- Increase the rate of pupils' progress in writing and mathematics by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects
  - making sure that pupils have regular, planned opportunities to practise writing at length in all subjects to develop their knowledge and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling
  - developing teachers' knowledge and skills, particularly in the teaching of phonics, so that pupils can make more rapid gains in reading.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - making sure that checks on the quality of teaching and learning are focused on how well different groups of pupils learn and are rigorous enough to identify weaknesses and resolve them quickly
  - ensuring that the school improvement plan includes regular and specific measures of success, linked to pupils' achievement, so that governors and senior leaders can check on the impact of their actions.

- providing more frequent opportunities for staff responsible for different age groups or subjects to check on the quality of teaching and learning
- making sure that the governing body uses information about how well the school is doing more effectively, including the use of pupil premium funding, so that governors can challenge the school's leaders to ensure all pupils achieve well.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, pupils make good progress in some lessons but slower progress in others. As a result, achievement requires improvement.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Too few pupils make good enough progress in reading because the teaching of phonics is variable across classes and year groups. In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 screening check in phonics was below average. However, recent changes to the teaching of phonics are now resulting in pupils making better progress in reading.
- In mathematics, pupils do not make fast enough progress because they do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in solving problems across a range of subjects. As a result, some of the more able pupils do not acquire the reasoning skills they need to reach the higher levels.
- Not enough pupils make consistently good progress in writing because they do not always get enough opportunities to write at length in different subjects and develop their understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Too often, the pace of learning slows because teachers do not set work at the right level of difficulty for pupils, so that it is either too hard for the less able or too easy for the more able and does not encourage them to think hard about their learning.
- Marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work and the use of individual targets to support pupils' progress is inconsistent.
- In the 2013 Year 6 tests, pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding were just over one year behind their peers nationally in mathematics, and just over half a term behind in English. Recent improvement in the organisation of teaching for these pupils is having a positive impact on their progress, and gaps in achievement are closing rapidly.
- As progress varies from class to class, the progress of disabled pupils, pupils with special educational needs and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also varies, mirroring the rate of progress of the pupils in their class.
- Most children join the Reception class with skill levels that are typically below those for their age. They make good progress because of well-planned activities that are particularly focused on developing their literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, they move to Year 1 with the knowledge and skills that are typical for their age.
- Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and physical fitness through physical education lessons and a range of additional competitive sporting activities. Specialist coaching for sports activities is provided by the primary school sport funding and participation in physical exercise is good across the school.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across year groups is too variable to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
- Where teaching is less than good, pupils are given the same task to complete, with the most able finding it too easy and the least able struggling to complete the work. Sometimes, additional tasks, or more difficult work, are not provided for those pupils who are completing the work set with ease. As a result, pupils lose concentration, become less enthusiastic in their work and do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- In mathematics, teachers do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to work things out for

themselves and solve problems. This limits their ability to reason and draw conclusions from their work.

- Pupils' progress in developing their skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling is not fast enough because they do not have enough opportunities to write at length, for a range of purposes, across all subjects.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. There are examples of good teaching enabling pupils to grasp the link between letters and sounds quickly. However, at other times, teaching does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to practise what they have learnt so that they still have difficulty reading unfamiliar words.
- Marking does not always give pupils helpful advice and guidance. As a consequence, pupils do not always have a clear idea about how to improve and reach the next level in their learning. In addition, individual targets do not always help pupils to focus on how to improve.
- Teachers do not always use teaching assistants well to support learning. Teaching assistants usually make good contributions to lessons but occasionally do not step in quickly enough so that pupils can move on more rapidly in their learning.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers' skilful questioning actively involves pupils in discussion and develops their speaking and listening skills well. Pupils have the confidence to ask questions of their teachers because relationships are exceptionally positive. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson, pupils made rapid progress in their use of mathematical language because questions challenged them very well to recall and use the correct terms. This good practice is not yet widespread.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Both the indoor and outdoor areas provide a good focus for children's personal development and effectively help to develop their literacy and mathematical skills.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils**

### **require improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because attitudes to learning are not good enough in lessons where teaching is less effective.
- Too often, tasks are not sufficiently engaging and work is not set at the right level of difficulty. Consequently, pupils lose interest and become restless and less focused, and then do not learn as well as they should. Where teaching is good or outstanding, pupils remain engaged and learn at a rapid rate.
- Pupils clearly enjoy their time at school and this is reflected in their improving attendance levels. Pupils show good manners, are polite towards staff, visitors and each other, and proudly talk about their school. Older pupils are always willing and ready to help with the younger children or to help teachers at assemblies.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and that they can tell an adult if someone is making them feel unhappy. They know about different kinds of bullying, especially cyber bullying, and what they can do to prevent it happening to them. Pupils are confident that adults will help them deal with any incidents of bullying, such as name calling, which they say are very rare.
- Pupils told inspectors that behaviour was generally good around the school and over time. Similar views were expressed by all of the parents the inspectors talked to.

**The leadership and management** require improvement

- High staff turnover, including at senior leadership level, and long-term staff absence have slowed the drive for improvement and standards have not risen at a fast enough rate.
- Checks by senior leaders on the quality of teaching and learning have not been rigorous enough in ensuring that weaknesses identified are tackled quickly. As a result, the quality of teaching still varies across the school.
- The school's planning documents are rightly focused on improving the progress and attainment of pupils. However, the targets set are not always clear or ambitious enough to steer rapid school improvement or provide an accurate view of how well the school is doing. Plans do not help leaders to judge the impact of their actions on pupils' progress.
- Those leaders in charge of subjects or age groups are not always clear about their roles and responsibilities. They have not had enough opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of work and use this information to help make sure that pupils make at least good progress.
- The determination of the new headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is making sure that teaching and achievement are starting to improve. School information on how well pupils are achieving is more accurate. There is an appropriate link between teachers progressing up the pay scale and their performance. The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is beginning to increase. Standards are starting to rise across all subjects. This demonstrates the school's capacity to improve.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, although there are not always enough planned opportunities for pupils to further extend their writing and mathematical skills in different subjects. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school. Pupils participate in music and singing, artwork, sports and extra-curricular activities. They value cultural diversity and have frequent opportunities to celebrate different festivals.
- The headteacher and staff have created a positive and welcoming place in which pupils can learn and develop. There are no signs of discrimination and all pupils are valued and have full access to the activities on offer. However, not all pupils are achieving well.
- The local authority is aware of the areas where the school requires improvement and provides effective support. It has recently supported school leaders in checking the quality of teaching and learning and has provided appropriate guidance about areas for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are aware that, until recently, they have not held leaders to account regarding the school's performance; this was, in part, because they relied too much on reports presented to them. Governors are ambitious to see improvements and have made good use of training, through the local authority, to increase their skills in order to provide greater challenge to school leaders. Members of the governing body have supported the headteacher in redefining the management structure of the school and ensuring that salaries are clearly linked to improvements in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. While governors have reviewed what the pupil premium is spent on, they have yet to evaluate its impact on the achievement of pupils who are eligible for the additional support. Governors have ensured that funding for sport is spent effectively and that the increased participation in physical exercise and sport is improving pupils' health and well-being. The governing body ensures safeguarding meets requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109898
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	431058

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Somner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Field
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 May 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	0118 9414410
<b>Fax number</b>	0118 9454891
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@kennetvalley.w-berks.sch.uk

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