

Great Malvern Primary School

Pickersleigh Road, Malvern, WR14 2BY

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

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.

- Good teaching helps all pupils, including those who need extra help and the most able, to make good progress.
- Pupils have made good progress from often low starting points by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards improved to be broadly average at the end of Year 6 in 2013. Progress was particularly good in writing.
- Progress across the school has improved because of better teaching. Although standards at Key Stage 1 were below average in 2013, they are now improving in all year groups.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Their positive attitudes and willingness to learn helps them to do well.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that the adults look after them well. Attendance rates have improved to be average.
- Leaders at all levels are ambitious for the school and work together well to improve teaching and to raise pupils' achievement.
- Leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching, and provide staff with clear guidance and professional training to help them develop their skills.
- The school gives sport a high priority and has used the primary sports funding well to enhance what it offers to pupils. Consequently, more are physically active and are developing healthier lifestyles.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to take pupils' good achievement to the next level. Standards in reading, by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, have not improved as much as they have in writing and mathematics.
- Occasionally, the work that teachers set for more-able pupils is too easy, limiting their progress.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their skills in mathematics when they are learning about other subjects.
- In some classes, pupils do not always practise their skills sufficiently well because they are not given time to respond to teachers' comments about their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by 16 teachers, and one assembly. Seven lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also undertook 'learning walks' which comprised a number of short visits to lessons to look at the teaching of reading, including phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) and learning in different subjects.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, other staff and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with pupils, listened to them read and observed them at play during break times and at lunchtime.
- The team reviewed the school's safeguarding policies, improvement plans, notes from meetings of the governing body and records of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and records of their progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 50 replies to the staff questionnaire. There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) to show the results. Inspectors looked at the responses to the school's most recent parental questionnaire. They also spoke to parents at the start of the school day as they brought their children to school.

Inspection team

Sarah Warboys, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Richard Kentish

Additional Inspector

Lynn Stanbridge

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Great Malvern Primary School is larger than most primary schools. It is expanding to accommodate an increasing number of pupils. A new building extension is due to open in July 2014.
- The school is an academy, which operates independently of the local education authority. This is the second inspection since it became an academy.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A well-above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding to the school. The funding is based on the number of children at the school in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported by school action is above-average as is the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. About half of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs. The remainder have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school runs a 'language unit', supporting a maximum of 10 pupils of all ages with individual needs. In addition, it runs two nurture groups for pupils with social, emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties. Pupils receive specialist support in the morning and return to their mainstream classes in the afternoon.
- The number of pupils joining or leaving the school at different times of the year is above-average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and help pupils make even faster progress, thereby raising standards, especially at Key Stage 1 and in reading at Key Stage 2, by ensuring all teachers:
 - build on the recent and successful approaches to teaching pupils to read
 - set harder work for pupils that are most able in all lessons
 - make sure pupils have opportunities to use and practise their skills in mathematics when they are learning about other subjects.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking by ensuring that teachers:
 - give pupils time to respond to teachers' marking so they can learn from their mistakes and practise their skills
 - learn from and adopt the most effective marking practice which already exists in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities well below those typical of their age. Although a below-average proportion of children reach a good level of development, especially in literacy and mathematics, they are closer to the national average in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.
- Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception because they are supported well by adults as they learn and practise new skills. For example, children in the Nursery successfully developed their physical and language skills as they jumped 'high' and 'higher' by bending their knees for extra spring.
- Although pupils in different year groups make good progress during their time at the school, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2013 were below average due to pupils' low starting points. At the end of Year 6, pupils reached broadly average standards except in reading, where they were about two terms behind pupils nationally. Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2013 made better progress in writing than they did in reading and mathematics.
- Recent assessment information, confirmed by work in pupils' books and the work they are doing in lessons, shows that standards are rising. More pupils are on track to make and exceed expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils currently in the school are making increasingly good progress.
- In 2013, the proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard in phonics was below average. However, standards in reading are improving rapidly because the school has introduced a daily phonics session to systematically teach letters and sounds to young children and to older pupils who find reading difficult.
- Similarly, a new approach to teaching reading at Key Stage 2 has recently got underway. Although it is too early to measure fully its impact on pupils' achievement, early indications are that it is paying dividends. An increasing number of pupils are now working at the levels expected for their age.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their low starting points because of the extra help they receive in the language units, in lessons and in small group work. Adults break learning down into small simple steps that pupils can achieve, which pupils find manageable, so make good progress.
- Pictures, diagrams and models help pupils to learn and understand new ideas. In a Year 5 and 6 class, for example, pupils learned to solve mathematical problems with real sweets. This activity was undertaken with great interest and enthusiasm. This approach is particularly helpful to pupils who find academic learning more difficult.
- Pupils who attend the nurture groups are helped to be calm and ready to learn. This was illustrated by the creation of a string 'web' by the group who realised that the role of each individual was essential to the formation of the web as a whole.
- In the language units, pupils receive help that is precisely targeted to their particular needs. They achieve well as a result. Adults manage pupils' behaviour particularly well and set

interesting tasks which help fill specific gaps in their knowledge and skills as well as maintaining their interest.

- Pupils joining partway through the school year are paired up with a 'buddy' to help them learn new routines and make new friends. Those arriving at the school unable to speak much English are supported effectively through pictures, diagrams and 'signing' gestures which help them communicate. Assessments of the skills and abilities of newly arrived pupils are made early to make sure that they get the extra help they need. Consequently, they make good progress.
- The extra funding received by the school to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used effectively. It pays part of the cost for eligible pupils to be supported in the language unit and nurture groups. In addition, it provides staff to enable pupils to be given one-to-one tuition and to work in small groups to provide emotional support for pupils, so they can learn better.
- The pupil premium funding also enables pupils to take part in educational trips that enrich their learning. As a result, they grow in self-confidence, are better able to learn and make good progress, similar to their peers. Of the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2013, eligible pupils were, on average, about a term behind their classmates in reading and three terms behind in writing and mathematics. Nationally, the gaps are over two terms in each
- In most lessons, teachers are providing more-able pupils at the school with work that is suitably challenging. They ask them questions and give them work to do that makes them think hard and this contributes to their good progress. In a few lessons, this does not happen so progress is slower.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well. Staff create inviting spaces with interesting tasks that promote curiosity and encourage children to try new things. Adults are skilled in working with children, interacting with them as they play. One such example was seen in the Reception class where children learned new words, 'forwards' and 'backwards'. They developed their understanding of numbers by moving up and down a rocket of numbers one to ten in order to reach 'baby bear' in the moon.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. They have a good knowledge of what they teach and make good use of technical vocabulary, encouraging pupils to use it confidently and accurately.
- Teaching assistants are fully involved in lessons, working skilfully with individuals and small groups. Adults provide pupils with clear explanations and show them good examples, particularly of writing, so they are clear about what is expected of them and what they have to do. As a result, pupils quickly settle to their work and no time is wasted.
- Pupils are routinely expected to share their ideas with each other in 'talk partners'. This paired working enables pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills particularly well. Pupils say they find this useful in being able to practise saying their ideas before writing.
- Homework is set regularly and helps pupils practise reading, writing and mathematics skills. They particularly enjoy working on 'Family' projects, such as making models with their parents at home.
- Teachers ask pupils searching questions to find out what they already know. They set work that

encourages them to think hard and to help them learn new ideas. Consequently, they make good progress. Occasionally, more-able pupils are set work that is too easy and they do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Work in pupils' books shows that all teachers praise and encourage them for their efforts when marking their work. In most cases, pupils are given precise guidance about what they need to do to improve, and their responses to this advice show improved progress. Not all teachers, however, give enough time for pupils to respond to their comments so they can learn from their mistakes and practise their skills. Progress is slower in these books.
- Teachers provide pupils with interesting opportunities to use their reading and writing skills when they are learning about other subjects. However, chances to use their skills in mathematics are not as fully established.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Parents and staff agree that pupils behave well. Around the school, the vast majority of pupils are friendly, polite and show good manners. Learning in lessons starts promptly at the start of the school day and after break times. Classrooms are well-organised and cloakrooms tidy.
- Pupils' positive attitudes help them to do well. Adults actively teach good learning behaviours and pupils respond well to their advice. Most pupils work hard and concentrate well. They work well together in groups and are supportive of each other. In one-to-one tuition, in small group work, in lessons and in other parts of the school, pupils are attentive and demonstrate respect for those who teach or help them, regardless of whether they are teachers, support staff, volunteers or visitors.
- Systems for managing pupils' behaviour are used effectively and consistently throughout the school. They have a good understanding of its rewards and sanctions, such as moving up and down on the 'zone boards'. Pupils say it helps them to control their behaviour.
- Occasionally, a few pupils become restless when they do not have enough to do in lessons and they lose concentration. As a result, they drift off task and their learning slows.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are looked after well by adults. They report, and the school's records show, that there are very few incidents of bullying, only a little name-calling. Pupils say adults are quick to help them deal with their concerns.
- Systems for promoting pupils' good attendance have been effective. Attendance rates have improved to average levels since the previous inspection as a result of more rigorous policies and procedures.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is supported well by a strong team of senior leaders. Staff morale is high and all are firmly behind the drive to raise pupils' achievement. Comments from staff to inspectors include, 'It is a pleasure to work with such lovely children' and 'Everyone has the children at the centre of everything we do'.

- Leaders at all levels know what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. They have taken robust and successful action to raise pupils' achievement in reading. Those in charge of leading different subjects and those who lead teams of staff, make regular checks to make sure pupils' attainment is catching up with the levels expected for their age.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed well and enables children to get off to a good start. Those leading the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs work well with outside agencies to get pupils extra help.
- Good attention is paid to ensuring equal opportunities for pupils. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and it is tackled robustly. Leaders and teachers meet on a regular basis to check on how well pupils are doing. Those who are not making sufficient progress are identified and provided with extra support, either socially, emotionally or academically to help them catch up.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors shared their views about the school's work. They expressed their appreciation of the progress their children had made and the care they had received.
- Senior leaders hold teachers responsible for the progress that pupils make. Teachers are given precise feedback on their performance. They are set targets for improvement and provided with professional training to help them to develop their skills. However, although teaching is consistently good, there is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure pupils make consistently rapid progress and reach high standards. .
- The school is using the primary sports funding to provide a specialist sports coach and two apprentices to work alongside class teachers to primarily improve the quality of sports teaching. It is enabling the school to offer pupils a wider variety of sport and plenty of opportunities, particularly those who are most able, to take part in competitions with other schools. Despite the lack of playground space during the building of the new extension, most pupils are physically active at break and lunchtimes. Together with more choice of after-school clubs, this enables pupils to develop healthier lifestyles.
- Visits, visitors, a programme of residential trips and links with schools in other countries enhance the school's teaching of different subjects. They are given lots of opportunities to appreciate and create art and music. In whole-school assemblies, pupils' enthusiastic singing contributes well to a sense of community. In one assembly, the headteacher created a moment of 'awe and wonder', represented by an audible gasp from all pupils, as he set fire to the 'omikujii', a Japanese bowl of fortunes written on strips of paper which are offered in Buddhist temples. Such activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors make good use of the skills they bring to the governing body. They are fully involved in looking ahead to make sure plans are in place for pupils to do well. Governors take note of published data. Therefore, they are aware that pupils' achievement has been below average in reading. With the school's senior leaders, they have visited other schools to see for themselves successful approaches to teaching reading in action. They have supported the school in implementing a new reading programme and make regular visits to see how well it is working. Governors manage the performance of the headteacher and hold him and other senior leaders to account for pupils' achievement. They support senior leaders in making sure the quality of teaching continues to improve and that only teachers who meet their targets progress along the pay scales. Governors keep a close check on the school's finances, including funding the new building extension as well as the spending of the pupil premium and primary sports funding. They know the language and nurture units provide well for those pupils who need extra help and that eligible pupils are making progress at a similar rate to

others. Governors are proud of the wide range of sporting opportunities that are improving the well-being of pupils. Working closely with the staff, governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet 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

Unique reference number	136984
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	440671

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Philpotts
Headteacher	Paul Jackson-Read
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2012
Telephone number	01684 574219
Fax number	01684 577582
Email address	office@greatmalvern.worcs.sch.uk

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