

Sheepscombe Primary School

Far End, Sheepscombe, Stroud, GL6 7RL

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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, good leadership and strong teamwork from all staff have brought about a significant change for the better in the culture for learning. Teaching and achievement are now good.
- Achievement is good. Pupils of all levels of ability make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers keep a 'watchful eye' on everyone's progress. They give pupils challenging work. Teachers' feedback to pupils on their work is excellent.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are often exemplary. Pupils persevere well because they find lessons interesting. They behave in a way that is both courteous and respectful.
- Pupils feel safe and are well looked after by adults within school. Every effort is made to support pupils who may be experiencing difficulties.
- The school provides some memorable learning opportunities, and pupils benefit from an exciting curriculum. Their enjoyment of the learning provided is reflected in their regular attendance.
- Educational visits, visitors, cultural and environmental work enhance the curriculum.
- The school's strong focus on values contributes very well to pupils' social and moral development.
- The governing body skilfully 'keeps the pot boiling', by presenting a high degree of challenge for the headteacher, to ensure teaching and achievement continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the expectation of what pupils can achieve is not consistently high in every lesson.
- Opportunities for pupils to reach the performance levels they are capable of in sport are not yet well established.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspector observed six lessons, delivered by four teachers and two teaching assistants. All of the lessons, except one, were observed jointly with the headteacher. The headteacher was observed teaching one of the lessons.
- The inspector noted pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and during playtimes. She looked at pupils' written work and mathematics work from all year groups, and listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 read.
- A meeting was held with a group of pupils.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and leaders responsible for English, mathematics and special educational needs. A meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice Chair and two other governors. The inspector had separate discussions with a representative from the local authority and with parents.
- The inspection took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) that were submitted during the course of the inspection and feedback from four staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's own records of pupils' learning and progress, the checks made on the quality of teaching and performance of staff and those relating to behaviour, attendance, child protection and safeguarding

Inspection team

Jane Neech, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- Sheepscombe Primary School is much smaller than an average-sized primary school. The current permanent, full-time headteacher took up her post in September 2013. Prior to her appointment, the school was led by three temporary, part-time headteachers, each for a period of time.
- A very small number of pupils is supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national figure. The pupils' needs relate mainly to moderate or severe learning difficulties and behaviour difficulties.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The number of pupils who join or leave the school partway through an academic year is higher than that found nationally. For example, of the pupils in Year 2, over three quarters have joined the school partway through Key Stage 1. Some pupils begin school with limited or no pre-school or nursery experience. Some pupils have been educated abroad or at home.
- There are two mixed-aged classes in the school. There is part-time nursery provision for three-year-old children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that expectations from teachers and teaching assistants are consistently high enough in all lessons so that standards rise further to help the school get to outstanding.
- Widen opportunities in sport to enable pupils to perform to a high standard which will contribute further to raising pupils' all-round achievements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most children's starting points in the Nursery or Reception class are typical for their age. Pupils who join the school in other year groups are carefully assessed so no pupil is disadvantaged. School information shows these pupils make good progress from their various starting points. The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils by pushing aside the legacy of past underachievement and raising standards through the improvements in teaching.
- Pupils, including those eligible for support through the pupil premium, are now making good progress in English and mathematics. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Key Stage 2 their attainment is above national expectations in reading and writing. The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved from past poor performance to being in line with local and national expectations.
- The story behind the data in this small school is important. Statistical comparison with national figures does not always show the picture of how pupils are doing. Year 2 is a real success story, despite the levels of attainment being currently low. The progress of these pupils, from very low starting points, has doubled this year already when compared to their previous progress. This is because teaching is more precisely geared to improving pupils' skills, such as in reading, through the teaching of phonics (the sounds made by letters).
- The most able pupils reach high standards in their work. The levels of attainment, as reflected in the National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 2, are now above the national average in reading and writing. School assessment information shows that levels of attainment are set to rise further. More pupils in Year 6 are reaching the higher Level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics. This is borne out by the quality of work in pupils' books.
- There is a change to the progress pupils make in mathematics from the previous year. Currently, approximately two in every three pupils are now making more-than-expected progress as a result of changes made to teaching. There is a sharper focus on challenging all abilities to achieve well. This means that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics has risen in Year 5. Pupils in Year 1 are also making better progress in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Support is carefully tailored to meet their learning needs and builds their understanding effectively. Parents rightly express the view that their children who receive extra help are doing well.
- Pupils read widely and talk with confidence about their favourite authors. Younger pupils of different abilities can use phonic strategies to work out unfamiliar words in the text. Nursery children delight in choosing picture books and can describe their favourite bit in the book.
- Pupils' performance in sport and the opportunity to reach a high standard are limited and, as yet, do not make a strong enough contribution to further raising pupils' all-round achievements.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils now have the benefit of teaching that is good, and some aspects are outstanding. This has had a significant impact on their progress in English and mathematics.
- A key strength in the skilful teaching in the Key Stage 2 class is the way teaching challenges pupils of different abilities to gain knowledge and skills. The number of pupils in each age group, in the class, is small or very small. However, the organisation and content of the teaching means that all pupils learn successfully.
- Pupils are inspired to write. For example, in Year 6, prompts from the teacher meant that pupils engaged in high-level discussions to consider the nuances between a fact and an opinion, in preparation for a piece of writing. Their excellent attitudes to learning underpinned the success of this work.
- Teachers create a very positive environment for learning. As a result, even the youngest children

'keep at it' during lessons. An adult kept alive the Reception children's interest in 'mending' the play house, by phoning, as the owner, to ask how much the 'renovations' would cost. This prompted further discussion and fascinated the children.

- Teachers' subject expertise is good; in teaching English at Key Stage 2 it is excellent. For example, pupils not only receive advice in their books from teachers when work is marked, but also throughout lessons. This means that pupils are continually improving their work as a result of exemplary marking. Throughout the school, teachers use assessment information competently to judge how well pupils are progressing. Consequently, they know exactly the precise steps which will move the pupils on to the next level.
- Skilled teaching assistants provide support to ensure that those who find learning more difficult enjoy their learning and achieve well. Teachers' and teaching assistants' flexible approach results in this group of pupils making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Homework is used for learning in different subjects. The work produced through homework tasks, such as making attractive Roman shields, is testimony to how the parents support their children's learning. Parents like the range of activities that the school offers through different topics and clubs. They would like more opportunities for their children to take part or compete in team sporting activities to support their children's all-round development.
- Relationships in lessons are positive. The strong emphasis given, for example, to encouraging pupils to make contributions during lessons is generally effective. Consequently, pupils are usually articulate and explain their ideas well. Occasionally, teachers' expectations are not always high enough to ensure that all pupils learn as well as they can.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The inspector endorsed the view of parents and staff that the behaviour of pupils is good, and on occasions outstanding. Pupils are interested and curious about learning. They enjoy visits to Ebworth, a local forest area, because this experience broadens their experience. Teachers' and teaching assistants' management of behaviour is generally good.
- Pupils are polite and respectful because the school invests time in teaching pupils about values for life, such as tolerance and understanding feelings. Behaviour is good at playtimes. Nursery children mingle happily with older pupils who demonstrate a caring approach to the youngest children in the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The overwhelming majority of parents who spoke with inspectors, or who responded to Parent View were positive about the care their children receive. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare. Should they seek help from adults if necessary, any concerns are resolved quickly.
- Pupils are happy in school and quickly welcome pupils who are new. Parents commented that isolated behavioural concerns were dealt with quickly. The inspector scrutinised behaviour records and actions taken by the school. She observed examples of good cooperation between pupils at work and at play.
- The school has good systems for supporting those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Links with external agencies enable pupils to receive the specialist support they need. In-school and after-school activities, including those made available through the primary sports funding, are popular with pupils.
- Sometimes, very occasionally, teachers' expectations are not high enough and so pupils can become distracted from their learning.

The leadership and management

are good

- Since being placed in special measures, school leadership has created a culture in which good teaching can flourish. In the last year, the current headteacher has successfully built on previous work, and stepped up the pace of improvement. She is leading the school with a steadfast

determination to ensure that teaching is of the highest quality, that pupils receive memorable experiences and are well prepared to move to the next stage in their education. She has maintained the focus on pupils' behaviour so that good attitudes to learning are generally the norm. All areas identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.

- Subject leadership was previously non-existent. It is now very effective. Subject leaders for English and mathematics have a sharp understanding of pupils' progress in their subjects. In this way no pupil 'slips through the net'. Documents produced by subject leaders are now being used as models of good practice within the local authority.
- Parents have been particularly impressed with the clear information they now receive from teachers about their children's progress. As a result, they value having a much better understanding of how to help their children at home.
- The targets set for teachers link the impact of teaching to the pupils' achievement and are used well to improve the amount of progress pupils make in English and mathematics. This ensures that everyone has an equal chance to do well.
- The school has focused much of its work on improving standards in English and mathematics. Additional funds, provided through extra government money (pupil premium), provide extra sessions in reading, writing and mathematics over and above that normally provided. Consequently, pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils have opportunities to visit places of cultural and historic interest which support their learning. A recent visit to Bristol Harbour and The Matthew arose from the pupils' fascination in learning about pirates. The school is aware that it needs to broaden aspects of the curriculum, such as in physical education.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Parents appreciate the respect shown by the school for different religions and beliefs.
- The local authority has provided support and challenge that are second to none. This is achieved through challenging conversations with the headteacher and key members of the governing body. Local authority representatives have been involved in regular reviews of teaching. They have provided follow-up support which has improved school performance, most notably around the subject leadership of mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of the Governing Body considers that the governing body is 'unrecognisable' in the way it operates now. He is correct. Governors are very confident in challenging and holding the headteacher to account for providing the best education. Governors made a prudent decision, welcomed by the school community, to appoint a full-time permanent headteacher. They have also been fully involved in tackling areas of previous underperformance in teaching.
 - Governors now have a sharp understanding of the standards all pupils achieve. They are strongly committed to ensuring that no pupil is disadvantaged and keen to see the school develop even further. They ensure that their statutory duties are met, for example in the systems to safeguard and protect pupils.
 - Governors assiduously check the information they receive on the quality of teaching and the achievement and progress pupils make, through the headteacher's reports and questions to English and mathematics leaders.
 - Governors have built up an excellent working relationship with the local authority and regularly join discussions and project meetings. They visit the school to see it at work. This approach gives governors a very good understanding of how teachers, including the headteacher, are held to account for their performance, and how teachers are being rewarded through salary progression.

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	115534
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	441890

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Newman
Headteacher	Sara Bennion
Date of previous school inspection	30–31 January 2012
Telephone number	01452813852
Fax number	not available
Email address	admin@sheepscombe.gloucs.sch.uk

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