

Wendover Church of England Junior School

Wharf Road, Wendover, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP22 6HF

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' achievement over time has not been good enough. Standards and progress in mathematics fell steadily in recent years. The rates of pupil progress are variable because not all teaching matches the best where learning is most rapid.
- Activities do not regularly provide appropriate challenge to pupils, especially those of average ability and the most able, to allow them to achieve well.
- Occasionally pupils are hindered in their attempts to improve their work because some teachers do not ensure pupils act upon the advice they give. Similarly whole-school agreed strategies and policies are not consistently followed by all staff.
- Some teachers do not express high expectations for pupils' behaviour. When learning lacks challenge some pupils become restless, attitudes to learning worsen and they do not always concentrate or work hard.
- Middle and senior leaders have only recently had the chance to begin to develop their roles. They are not yet fully involved in checking and helping the work of other teachers.
- The checks leaders at all levels make on the school's effectiveness are not always sufficiently robust to bring about rapid improvements. Although school leaders have identified actions for improvement, they do not all evaluate the impact of their actions rigorously enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment is high in reading. In 2013 this was also the case in writing.
- Leaders, including governors, are ambitious and determined to raise achievement by improving the quality of teaching. They have successfully tackled underachievement and halted the downward trend in pupils' achievement in mathematics.
- Leaders ensure that spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is promoted well through a wide range of subjects and activities.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well outside lessons. Attendance is high. The school keeps pupils safe.
- The majority of parents are positive about the school and say that their children are safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning across the school. They visited lessons or part lessons in most of the 12 classes. Several were observed jointly with either the executive or acting headteacher. Pupils' work in books, in particular that of Year 6 and Year 3 pupils, was scrutinised by the team. Inspectors also discussed the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive and acting headteachers, senior and middle leaders, to discuss the progress that groups of pupils make throughout the school. An inspector also met with a group of governors.
- The team examined records of the local authority's involvement with the school and met with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors considered parents' views of the school through informal discussions and letters received during the inspection. They reviewed the school's own recent parental survey and also considered 81 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors took into account the views of 22 staff who completed the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally throughout the inspection. Pupils' behaviour was observed in lessons and at various times around the school, including lunchtime.
- Among the documents scrutinised were plans showing how the school intends to improve further, records of pupils' standards and progress, minutes from governors' meetings and information showing how the school keeps pupils and staff safe and secure.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Jacqueline Marshall, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Huw Evans | Additional Inspector |
| Gill Walley | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized junior school. The John Hampden Infant School and John Colet Academy share the same site as the junior school. Most pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is lower than similar schools. This is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or to children who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school receives support from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust which is commissioned by the local authority.
- The executive headteacher, who works for the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust, took up the temporary post at Easter 2014. At the same time, one of the two assistant headteachers became the acting headteacher. A substantive headteacher has been appointed and is currently working in the school one day a week. He is due to take up his post in full in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to secure good progress over time for all pupils by making sure that all teachers:
 - provide engaging work for pupils and quickly move them on to more challenging work once they have demonstrated their understanding of what is being taught
 - are able to share and benefit from the best practice in the school, particularly guidance for pupils on how to improve their work
 - are consistent in their use of whole-school policies and practice.
- Improve pupils' behaviour so that pupils all have good attitudes to learning and want to do their best by making sure:
 - teachers express high expectations of behaviour so that pupils are ready to learn in lessons and take a pride in their work
 - every teacher sets work which challenges, stimulates and encourages all pupils to do their best and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Increase the impact of school leaders by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so that they are more effective in checking the quality of the work of the school and the difference their actions are making
 - making sure that the checks all leaders make on the school's effectiveness are rigorous, regular and clearly identify how they will know they have been successful.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress in classes across the school is patchy. Too few pupils make good progress over time, particularly in mathematics. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has fallen for the last three years in mathematics. In the past the proportion of pupils making the expected gains between Key Stages 1 and 2 was not high enough.
- Leaders acted promptly to tackle the inconsistent quality of teaching across the school and ensure all staff use information about pupils' progress to help those who are making slower progress. Current assessment information and work in pupils' books show progress is speeding up and many pupils have achieved well since the start of the year. However, this improvement is not yet consistent in all classes.
- Standards achieved in reading and writing by Year 6 pupils in 2013 were high compared to other schools nationally. However, in mathematics they continued to fall. Leaders, including governors, made improving mathematics a priority for the school. An increased focus on how mathematics was taught, involving pupils in their learning more and training for staff all combined to eradicate underachievement. Consequently, information on progress and pupils' work shows that rates of progress are rising and the levels that pupils are working at are higher than at the same time last year.
- Pupils are now making at least expected progress in mathematics, although it is not yet consistently good across all classes. This is because teachers do not always move the most able and those of average ability on to more challenging work once they show they have a secure understanding in their learning. Pupils are expected to complete 'all the questions before we get on to the challenge', and they say the work at times is 'too easy' because it is targeted at those who are struggling.
- Leaders identified that progress for some pupils with special educational needs was less strong than their peers. There has been an increased focus on closely checking the progress of this group and improvements to the support they receive in class and in small groups. This has ensured that they now make similar progress to their peers; for some progress is good.
- Pupils enjoy reading and most read often at home. Older pupils enjoy the work from a range of authors. Those working at levels typical in secondary school are further challenged in small reading groups tackling more challenging texts. As a result, by the end of Year 6, a good proportion of pupils make better progress than other pupils nationally.
- The gap in attainment of pupils supported through the additional funding remains wide compared to other pupils, although the gap narrowed from 2012. In 2013, by the end of Year 6, eligible pupils were behind by between one term and a year in mathematics, reading and writing. School evidence shows these pupils are continuing to close the gap and making similar, and sometimes better, progress than their peers across the school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not consistently promoted good achievement. Therefore, as pupils move through the school their progress has not been consistently good.
- Senior leaders have tackled inadequate teaching successfully, but inconsistencies remain, and not all matches the strong teaching and learning seen in some classes. For example, some teachers have embraced a range of new initiatives and seen progress and learning speed up. However, others are not yet consistently applying these in their classrooms and teaching, hindering the progress pupils make.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not consistently high enough. Occasionally, work is set at too low a level and is too easy for pupils. They are expected to complete this before moving on to work at a more appropriate level. Pupils become restless and talkative, preventing them making the progress of which they are capable. This is most evident for pupils of average ability and the most able. Their learning is not regularly checked so that once they

can demonstrate they have a secure understanding they are enabled to become even more successful in their work. Pupils' progress is most rapid where teachers check regularly how well pupils are doing and promptly adapt activities to increase the challenge or provide support where needed.

- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and they increasingly provide helpful comments to show pupils how they can improve their work. However, the best quality marking seen in some classes is not yet found consistently across the school. In some classes teachers' advice does not extend pupils' learning; there are too few occasions for pupils to respond to their marking by correcting and improving their own work. Consequently, they continue to make the same mistakes.
- Where learning is best, pupils work hard because teachers provide tasks that are challenging and make them concentrate. For example, Year 3 pupils had to create complex and compound sentences about the previous day's Roman history experience. This prompted much discussion because of the meaningful link to their history topic which had captured the imagination of boys and girls alike. From the start the most able were challenged further to use their knowledge to add a subordinate clause.
- Additional adults within the classroom take actions that are ensuring disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making at least expected, and often good, progress. Leaders acted effectively following identification of this as an area for development in a local authority review in the autumn term. An increased focus on their role in the classroom this year has successfully increased their effectiveness.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour requires improvement. Although pupils are friendly and polite, their attitudes to learning are not always as positive.
- Where teaching requires improvement, pupils sometimes become distracted, fidgety and lose concentration. Pupils spend too long settling down to work and carry on chatting when asked by the teacher to stop. Not all pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, it is not always finished and some scribble in their books. This is because some teachers' management of behaviour is not always effective and teachers do not consistently set high expectations of how pupils should behave. This is in marked contrast to classes where pupils are engrossed, challenged and excited about their work; attitudes towards learning in these classes are extremely strong.
- During break and lunchtimes the school is calm and pupils play well together. Throughout the open spaces and in the dining hall, pupils are respectful of each other and enjoy the range of activities available. Attendance is high.
- Pupils typically get on well together regardless of background. They show care and sensitivity towards those pupils who have additional difficulties or find behaving well a challenge. They show maturity when helping one another in lessons and listen respectfully whilst others share their views. Records show staff are successful when supporting a very small number of pupils with particular behavioural needs and their families. This reflects the school's focus on ensuring everyone has the same chances and helps to foster good relationships.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The site is safe and secure; pupils know their boundaries and take care when moving around the large shared site. The vast majority of the parents who spoke to inspectors and those who responded to Parent View said that their children are safe.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They say that incidences of bullying are rare, but when pupils fall out or call names they know an adult will help them to sort it out. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and how to keep safe when using technology, including the internet.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement. Checks to ensure the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school and that all pupils are achieving well have not taken place frequently enough. Systems to check the school's work by leaders at all levels and ensure all aspects are effective are not yet regular or rigorous enough.
- Leadership by the executive headteacher is good and he is supported increasingly effectively by the acting headteacher. Together they have identified the key areas for improvement and promptly taken action to address these. For example, although some weaker teaching remains, they have tackled the weakest teaching and ensured that pupils' progress this year is speeding up. They share their vision with staff, leaders and governors and, as a result, all are clear what the school needs to do to improve.
- Leaders, including governors, and most other staff support the new leadership team in the drive to bring about improvements and raise pupils' achievement. They acknowledged in their written comments the 'fantastic progress' the school has made, that the school now has 'capacity for more rigorous monitoring' and 'has the potential to be a very good school'.
- Middle leaders are becoming increasingly active in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility, for example by scrutinising pupils' work. However, they have yet to evaluate more thoroughly the impact new initiatives are having on pupils' progress or provide enough guidance to teachers about how their work can be improved.
- Systems to check the work of teachers are improving. Senior leaders visit classrooms regularly to see how well teachers are doing and agree how to improve their classroom practice. However, plans to improve the quality of teaching by sharing the best practice seen in some classes have yet to be implemented. Teachers know that their progression on the pay scale is linked to their performance in the classroom and that only the best teaching is rewarded.
- The school has the capacity to sustain improvements. The local authority has provided increasing support to the school over the last year. It successfully supported the governors in their appointment of a new headteacher and leaders during the period until he takes up his post permanently in September.
- The provision for sport is well developed. Leaders use the additional primary funding effectively so that teachers deliver good quality physical education. This is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being and understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy. Pupils say they enjoy the new clubs that are on offer. Some now take part who would not previously have done so because of the introduction of new activities such as street dance.
- Pupils engage in a variety of experiences through the subjects they are taught. These especially focus on providing them with memorable activities. A range of themed topics successfully incorporates plans to improve pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps to foster their caring attitudes towards each other.
- Parents are supportive of the school and the vast majority think their children are happy and well looked after. They appreciate the improvement in communication about changes to leadership compared to the last time the school had a period of staff turbulence. However, a minority feel the school could provide greater information about how their children are doing.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are fully involved in the school. They have effectively overseen changes to the school's leadership to bring about improvements. They have evaluated their own effectiveness and attended training to improve their skills. They use their training to good effect and compare the school's performance with other schools nationally. The increased level of information they are now receiving is enabling them to make more informed decisions and challenge school leaders to ensure pupils achieve well. Governors are keen to make their own checks even more robust in order to make sure the improvements are being sustained. They know teachers are rewarded with salary progression and promotion according to how their teaching promotes improved progress for pupils. Governors do not tolerate discrimination within the school. They check the additional funding is closing gaps in attainment for eligible pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 110421 |
| Local authority | Buckinghamshire |
| Inspection number | 443820 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 338 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Tony Fish |
| Headteacher | Kevin Burrell (Executive Headteacher), Jenny Bartlett (Acting Headteacher) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25–26 January 2011 |
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