

Furze Platt Junior School

Oaken Grove, Maidenhead, SL6 6HQ

Inspection dates 26–27 June 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.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Since his appointment he has worked successfully with senior leaders and governors to improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Most pupils now make good progress throughout the school. Standards are now well above last year's national average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 6.
- The most able pupils are challenged particularly well in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Consequently, the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels in mathematics is rising in these year groups.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- The headteacher has ensured that staff share his drive for improvement. Teachers are keen to improve their practice and to develop new ideas.
- The stimulating range of subjects and topics provides pupils with good opportunities for using their English and mathematics skills in other subjects. They apply these to solve real-life problems.
- Pupils' high attendance shows how much they enjoy school. They behave well in lessons and around the school and cooperate well with each other and with their teachers.
- Governors know how well different groups are performing and what leaders have done to improve teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- In Year 3, pupils' writing does not develop as quickly as in other parts of the school.
- Not enough is done to reinforce good handwriting and presentation of work.
- The school does not provide consistent challenge for the most-able pupils in some subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which six were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, looked at a range of their work and examined the school's data on attainment and progress. They also heard a sample of pupils read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, teachers and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors considered the 117 responses to the online Parent View survey, a few letters from parents and carers and spoke to some parents and carers.
- Inspectors considered responses to the 25 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and records of school leaders' observations of teaching.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Littlejohn

Additional Inspector

Simon Adams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Furze Platt Junior School is a larger-than-average sized junior school. It is growing in size and, from September 2014, there will be three classes in each year group.
- Most pupils are White British although the proportion from minority ethnic groups is above average. The percentage who speak English as an additional language is also a little higher than in most schools.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The number supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional government funding provided for looked after children and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- There have been staff changes in recent years, including at senior level. The headteacher took up post in September 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school shares its site with Furze Platt Infant School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure teaching inspires pupils to make outstanding progress, by:
 - enabling Year 3 pupils to improve their spelling by helping them to apply their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) accurately and increasing opportunities for them to write at length
 - helping pupils to improve their handwriting and their presentation of work
 - making sure teachers provide consistent levels of challenge, especially for the most-able pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- As a result of strengthened leadership and better teaching, most pupils are achieving well and are confident learners. It is clear from pupils' work that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are rising.
- As pupils enter Year 3, their attainment is above average. They make good progress overall through Years 3 to 6 and achieve well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 6.
- The proportions reaching both average and higher levels in Year 6 are now considerably better than last year's national figures in reading, writing and mathematics. Analysis of pupils' assessments and their work and teaching observations show standards are also much higher for Year 5 pupils than are found in most schools.
- Progress in mathematics is swift in Years 5 and 6, especially for the most-able pupils. High-quality teaching, including some specialist teaching in Year 6, is increasing the proportions of pupils attaining standards that are three years or more ahead of their age. However, they are not always fully challenged in their learning in the rest of the school and in other subjects.
- Pupils' progress in reading is good. Pupils who read to inspectors showed high levels of skill and were very enthusiastic about reading. Those who struggle benefit from a structured programme. This helps them to recognise the sounds that letters make and use these phonics skills to tackle unknown words.
- Progress in writing is generally good. Pupils write well in a range of different ways and do especially well in the Year 6 national tests for spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Spelling is a weaker aspect of writing in Year 3 where pupils do not consistently learn to apply phonics skills when writing. Some pupils in this age group do not write at length frequently enough because they are not given enough opportunity to do so. A few pupils in every year group do not write as neatly as they should or join their handwriting because these skills are not consistently well taught across the school.
- Pupils become adept at using their very secure number skills when tackling mathematical problems, such as when more-able mathematicians in Year 5 calculated the volumes of cuboids to solve problems related to finding efficient packaging.
- Pupils make good progress in applying their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills to other subjects and real-life problems. This happened when Year 6 pupils wrote graffiti warnings and well-constructed arguments to persuade others why graffiti should not be allowed.
- Pupils of different ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress similar to their classmates. This is because of the individual support they receive combined with good teaching in lessons.
- The few pupils supported by additional funding achieve well. Their good progress is a result of the good support they are given and wise use of the funding. The school identifies their requirements accurately and quickly puts in place effective support for their particular learning needs so they achieve as well as other pupils. Pupils' attainment was much improved in Year 6 in 2013. It was in line with their peers' in reading and writing although a little below their peers' in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good with aspects that are outstanding. Teaching has been a focus for improvement and the results are clear to see in the majority of lessons and in pupils' books. This is why pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Teaching is lively, engaging and creative. The curriculum is well designed for helping teachers to link subjects together so that learning in one subject underpins their learning in another. It is mostly well structured for enabling pupils to build their basic skills securely in lessons and over time.
- Learning is enjoyable because most teachers have high expectations and provide interesting opportunities for pupils to apply their learning in a meaningful way. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 worked very hard when writing persuasively to create pamphlets encouraging tourism in Greece. Pupils' high-quality writing for both English and Greek history was the result of the careful building of their skills in previous lessons.
- Teachers use a range of approaches to explore pupils' understanding and develop it further. For example, skilful questioning gives pupils worthwhile opportunities to discuss and share ideas, which encourages them to learn from each other.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress well. They usually use this information to plan lessons that successfully build on what pupils already know. The work set for most pupils is at the right level but teachers in Year 3 do not give pupils enough opportunities to create longer pieces of writing.
- Teaching is also not outstanding because some of the most-able pupils do not have higher levels of challenge to help them make outstanding progress over time. While teaching in Years 5 and 6, including some specialist mathematics teaching, is enabling these pupils to make rapid progress in mathematics, the needs of the most-able pupils are not consistently met across the school or in all subjects.
- Systematic teaching of phonics for the few who struggle with reading helps them to develop their reading skills well. Teachers enable pupils to apply their knowledge of phonics well when reading but this is less consistent for spelling in Year 3. Systems for teaching handwriting are not yet thorough across the school and all teachers do not insist that pupils present their work neatly, including in mathematics.
- Marking is good in different subjects and classes. Teachers provide guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and they celebrate good achievement. Pupils understand their achievement targets and use these extremely well to evaluate their own and their peers' standards of work in order to make improvements.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' education, including those learning to speak English, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is because their work is carefully planned.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They show respect and kindness to each other and pupils from diverse backgrounds get on extremely well together. This is because their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted.
- Pupils are courteous and respectful and behave very well in the corridors, dining room and playground. This enables them to take full advantage of the excellent outdoor facilities where they have fun and play sensibly.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and do their best, although in a few lessons they wait too long to ask for help and do not take the initiative to find things out for themselves. They listen carefully to adults and concentrate in lessons so that very little time is wasted in managing behaviour. Sometimes, when work is not tailored so well to pupils' abilities, their attention wanders but this does not disrupt the learning of others.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have good relationships with adults and say that they feel very safe and confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with effectively.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and think bullying is extremely rare.
- They have a good understanding how to keep themselves safe in school and the local

environment. They also know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that behaviour is good and feel that their children are kept safe.
- Pupils' attendance is high and has improved in the past two years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has made many changes for the better since his arrival. Under his strong leadership, senior and subject leaders have developed into an effective team. Together with governors, leaders are focused sharply on lifting standards and have raised staff's expectations of pupils' achievement.
- The roles of senior and subject leaders have been clarified. An appropriate leadership structure has been developed to cater for the school's expansion to three-form entry. At the heart of the school's ambitious plans for further improvement is the clear purpose of ensuring the potential of every pupil is fully realised.
- Leaders have transformed the culture of the school into one of high expectations. Teachers have welcomed the help they have been given to improve their teaching. The school's success is based on much improved systems for managing staff's performance.
- Teachers now work as a team and joint planning across each year team is providing greater consistency in the quality of pupils' work. Senior and subject leaders regularly check the quality of teaching throughout the school. They also examine pupils' work and assessments and provide constructive feedback. Staff are now held to account for pupils' performance.
- The review of teachers' performance by leaders and governors is rigorous, including decisions about pay increases. This, combined with leaders' thorough checks on teaching and the strong focus on training, has led to improved teaching. Coaching and mentoring are successfully used to ensure teachers improve.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because measures to improve the quality of teaching have not yet resulted in consistently outstanding teaching over time.
- The school enables pupils to develop their skills and knowledge across a range of subjects. The greater variety of activities that are taught out of school, for example sports clubs, provides pupils with rich opportunities for increasing their interests and talents. However, there is not yet consistently enough challenge for the most-able pupils.
- The school has good partnerships with other primary schools, parents and carers. It is building closer links with the local secondary school in order to strengthen teachers' subject expertise, including increasing the level of challenge for the most-able pupils.
- Very good use is made of the additional funding to engage pupils in physical activities. The school employs specialist sports teachers to develop teachers' expertise and pupils' skills. Opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport have increased. The impact is seen in pupils' eagerness to take part in sports and improving skills in a wider range of sports.
- The local authority provides effective support in moving the school forward. The school has welcomed the challenge the local authority has provided and made good use of its help, including some subject training. The local authority's current lighter touch reflects the school's capacity to improve without outside help.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has successfully overseen a period of improvement since the arrival of the headteacher. Governors have received appropriate training for their roles. They know and understand the school and are aware of what has been done to improve teaching and how achievement compares to that in other schools. They provide both good support and challenge. The level of challenge has increased since the headteacher arrived as they now have better access to pupils' assessment information. They have thorough procedures to

manage the performance of the headteacher. Governors have fully supported the headteacher in restructuring staffing and in ensuring pay awards are based on effective teaching and good achievement. They have a secure knowledge of the quality of teaching in the school and the extent to which any gaps in achievement are being closed. They closely monitor the spending of additional funding and funds available to improve pupils' sporting achievement.

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	109842
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	431456

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Wilks
Headteacher	Michael Wallace
Date of previous school inspection	24 June 2009
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