

# Gardners Lane Primary School

Gardners Lane, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL 51 9JW

**Inspection dates** 1–2 July 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in all year groups. Children join the school with low levels of skills and leave Year 6 having reached broadly average standards.
- The high proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals make particularly good progress and the gap between their performance and that of their classmates has almost closed.
- The quality of teaching is good and is the main reason for pupils' good progress.
- Teachers mostly provide good levels of challenge for their pupils, and this shows in the number achieving the higher levels in the national assessments at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and play a key role in aiding pupils' good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They are polite and considerate. They are keen to do well in class and typically work hard.
- The school's procedures for keeping pupils safe are rigorous and regularly reviewed.
- There is a shared determination among all leaders, staff and governors to provide the best for the pupils. This is reflected in the school's thorough systems which have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Middle managers are particularly effective in driving improvements in their subjects.
- Governors are supportive and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement as a result of their programme of well-focused visits.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as it is in reading because they do not always have sufficient command of spelling and grammar rules or a sufficiently wide vocabulary to write engagingly.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as strong as it could be because they are not fast enough at calculations and do not get enough experience of solving problems when they are written in words.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 18 lessons, four of these jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body and vice chair. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met informally with parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school days. It was not possible to analyse the results of the responses to the Ofsted online survey, Parent View, as too few responses had been made. However, the inspectors analysed the results of the school's own parental survey, carried out in January 2014.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation, development planning and policies and procedures, including those relevant to keeping pupils safe.
- The inspectors evaluated the school's information on the progress that pupils are making.

## Inspection team

John Eadie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennie Cutler

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Gardners Lane Primary School is an average-sized primary school. Pupils are grouped into eight classes: one for Reception, one for Reception and Year 1, one for Years 1 and 2, and one each for Years 2 to 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority, is much higher than average.
- A large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic groups with no one group predominating, although the proportion of pupils from Asian backgrounds is increasing. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is federated with another primary school and seven children's centres. The headteacher is executive headteacher of all of these schools and centres, which also all share the same governing body.
- The school shares its site with one of these children's centres, which did not form part of this inspection.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in writing by:
  - developing and implementing a programme to improve their skills of spelling and grammar
  - improving pupils' use of vocabulary so that their writing is more interesting.
- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in mathematics by:
  - developing and implementing a strategy to improve pupils' skills in calculating
  - improving pupils' ability to tackle mathematical problems that are set out in words.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well in all subjects, but better in reading than in writing and mathematics.
- Children's skill levels when they join the Reception classes are low, particularly in language and communication and in their readiness for learning. They make good progress in the Reception Year, but their skills are still well below average when they start in Year 1.
- This good progress continues in Years 1 and 2, particularly in the development of pupils' reading skills. For instance, in 2013, a below average proportion of Year 1 pupils reached the national average in the national screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make). This year, that proportion has increased significantly. Most of those who were below average in Year 1 in 2013 have improved this year, shown by their results when they retook the check.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and they leave Year 6 having reached broadly average standards. Their progress in reading is a little better than in writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils read competently, though not particularly widely.
- Pupils make less rapid progress in writing, though it is still good. Although the school has put in place a programme to develop pupils' spelling and grammar, this is too recent to have had effect yet. Similarly, there is no rigorous programme across the school for improving pupils' use of vocabulary.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is good, but not as fast as it could be. The school has recognised the need for pupils to develop their calculation skills more rapidly and has introduced a programme for this, which is beginning to be effective. However, some pupils experience difficulties with problems set out in words, and leaders are developing strategies to address this.
- There are generally good levels of challenge for the most able in all year groups, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This has resulted in a few pupils gaining the highest Level 6 in the national assessments in mathematics, and in others winning open scholarships to independent schools.
- The school makes good use of the additional funding to support pupils eligible for free school meals, and many of them make more rapid progress than their classmates. This has meant that the school has closed the gap between their performance and that of other pupils in almost all year groups. In the national assessments in Year 6 in 2013, their progress since Key Stage 1 was broadly similar to that of their classmates, although their attainment was lower. The gap in attainment has closed significantly this year, and pupils eligible for free school meals are working at similar levels to others in all year groups.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates because the school's very good procedures prevent them from falling behind.
- The pupils from minority ethnic groups, and particularly those who speak English as an additional language, make progress that is at least as fast as other pupils'. Several of them are achieving very well.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in all year groups in the school.
- Teaching in all subjects, including English and mathematics, is typically stimulating and engages pupils well. Pupils say that 'teachers try to make our lessons fun'. Very occasionally, teaching is less motivating and pupils' learning slows a little.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and play a key role in aiding pupils' progress, often, but not exclusively, for those pupils with special educational needs. For instance, in one class the assistant led a session on mental mathematics for the most-able pupils.
- Teachers use technology well to support their teaching. For example, one teacher used the interactive whiteboard very well to demonstrate mathematical processes and pupils' learning was rapid during this presentation.
- Teachers use the school's new marking system well, and pupils say that this gives them clear

indications of what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils appreciate the time they are given to respond to teachers' comments and say that this time is used well to practise skills that they need to develop.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. Adults foster good relationships with pupils.
- Pupils are keen to do well in class and typically work hard. This attitude only slips slightly when, occasionally, teaching does not fully engage them. They work well in pairs and small groups.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe, both around the school and beyond. For example, they have a good knowledge of the potential dangers of using the internet. Parents and carers spoken to and those who completed the school's survey agreed that their children feel safe in school.
- Some pupils and one parent or carer said that there are occasional instances of bullying. However, the parent or carer and all pupils spoken to were very positive about the way that school staff deal quickly and very effectively with bullying when it is reported.
- The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind, and welcomes and fully integrates the pupils from minority ethnic groups. Any use of racist language is rare and stems from a lack of understanding. Pupils say that staff treat these incidents well.
- The school's strenuous efforts to promote attendance reflect the concern for individual pupils, but despite this, attendance is still below average, although it is improving.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The executive headteacher provides clear leadership for the school and the deputy headteacher ably provides support in day-to-day management. Both recognise the school's strengths and areas for development, and are able to support their views with evidence. Governors are supportive and visit regularly, so that they have good first-hand knowledge of the school.
- Middle managers are particularly effective. For instance, the relatively new teams for English and mathematics have taken a number of initiatives which are already having an impact in improving pupils' progress in writing and in mathematical calculation. There is a real sense of teamwork among the staff, and several new members of staff commented on the strong support they have received from their colleagues.
- There is a continual drive for improvement in the quality of teaching. Checking is regular and the leadership team and middle managers observe classroom teaching. This is not only effective in improving the impact of teaching, but also in building the staff team.
- There are good links with a local group of schools, and in particular the federated primary school and children's centres, and these links have enabled the school to share expertise in staff development.
- The two schools in the federation have employed a parent support advisor, who has been very successful in arranging support for several families. There are very good links with the Nursery in the on-site children's centre, which ensures a smooth transition for young children when they start in the Reception classes. For example, children from the Nursery visit regularly.
- There are effective links with parents and carers. All the parents and carers who spoke to inspectors were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school, and the results of the school's survey were also very supportive. There are also good links with the local community. The pupils benefit significantly from these links. For instance, the partnership with a local independent girls' school enables pupils from this school to support learning regularly and, in particular, to raise the aspirations of girls.
- Central to the school's values is equality of opportunity. For example, the school has successfully

planned a range of subjects and topics to provide a broad range of experiences, matched well to the pupils' interests and needs, so that they are prepared very well for the future.

- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships at all levels are good and a strong sense of community is encouraged. Pupils know right from wrong and make the right choices. They manage their own behaviour well and the school gives them opportunities to do so.
- Pupils are aware of their own culture and have many opportunities to extend their cultural awareness, for instance by celebrating the traditions of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school manages its funding carefully. For example, it uses the additional funding well. The school focuses very clearly on the needs of eligible pupils and is effective in accelerating their progress. The school has also employed staff to support the pastoral needs of these pupils.
- Leaders have planned the use of the new funding for primary sport well. Links with the local university have extended sporting opportunities, and pupils are now engaged in tournaments in a wide range of sports. Coaches provide extra activities after school. This has enabled pupils to enjoy new sports such as dodgeball. These initiatives have benefited pupils' health and well-being, and pupils say that they particularly enjoy the wider range of sporting activities available.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough and rigorous, and keep pupils safe.
- The local authority has been involved at the school's request. For example, it has supported the school in the initiatives to improve pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is supportive and wants to provide the best for every pupil. Governors have a well-developed framework for judging the school's effectiveness, and through their well-focused visits are directly involved in checking several aspects of its work. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Governors understand the implications of the national information on the school's performance. However, they also recognise the need for training to enable them to issue greater levels of challenge to leaders about performance. They know how the school uses the additional funding and that it is well spent. The setting of targets for teachers is effective and where appropriate, is linked to progression through the pay scales.

## 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>	131249
<b>Local authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	439965

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>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Revd Stephen Eldridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Charles Welsh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10–11 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01242 515761
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