

# Pinchmill Lower School

The Old Road, Felmersham, Bedford, MK43 7JD

**Inspection dates** 18–19 September 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils attain well and consistently reach above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class. Teaching is good and activities are planned well to suit children at different levels of ability.
- Pupils enjoy school. They want to learn and the great majority apply themselves diligently to their tasks.
- Pupils feel safe in school. Their parents agree.
- Pupils behave well. They are courteous to all members of the school community. Mutual respect and warm relationships are evident.
- The headteacher, supported by governors, has improved the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils make good progress.
- Governors ask searching questions of the headteacher. They visit the school regularly to see for themselves how well pupils are doing.
- The well-planned curriculum promotes pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils sometimes find work too easy. Adults do not always ask the right questions to deepen their understanding. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as highly as they could.
- Marking does not always help pupils to improve their work.
- Pupils do not have such good opportunities to develop and practise their skills in mathematics as they do in English. Consequently, they do not achieve as well in the subject by the end of Year 4.

## Information about this inspection

- The learning of pupils was observed in all classrooms. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Work in pupils' books was examined in detail. A group of pupils from Year 2 were heard reading.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher and other members of staff, a group of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents provided by the school. These included details of the progress pupils currently make, records of governing body meetings, the school's improvement plans and its evaluation of its work, as well as information relating to attendance and the safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and informal discussions with parents and carers before school. The 13 responses to the staff questionnaire were also analysed.

## Inspection team

Jill Thewlis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils who receive support from pupil premium (because they are eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is one in eight. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average. Those supported at school action is above the national average

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

- Improve teaching and raise achievement, especially for the most-able pupils, by:
  - applying the school marking policy effectively, so that pupils know how to improve their work and teachers check that they act on the advice given
  - asking probing and challenging questions in lessons to check that most-able pupils are not finding work too easy, to make them think hard and ensure that their learning is suitably extended
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their skills in mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- In the three years since the headteacher has been in post, there has been a steady improvement in all results.
- All inadequate teaching has been eradicated. All adults in the school set a good example to pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve well and have good attitudes to learning.
- Leaders' checks on the school's progress are accurate. They have correctly identified the areas in which they need to improve.
- The school has implemented the new National Curriculum through topics that link different subjects together. There are many opportunities to develop the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils. The school is working with a local upper school to help pupils become more aware of different cultures within the country. All major religions are celebrated. Music is given a priority. All pupils in Year 4 study the recorder and the school choir is thriving. It is too early to assess the impact of the new curriculum on the learning of pupils.
- The primary school sport funding is used well. The school is part of the local sports partnership and pupils take part in many sport festivals and competitions. Teachers have received training in the teaching of gymnastics and games. As a result, they are more confident in leading high-quality lessons in physical education. There are a number of sport clubs both before and after school, some led by qualified coaches. All clubs have healthy numbers, with some having a waiting list.
- Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their children. Each year, they receive three written reports and have three separate occasions to speak to teachers formally. The headteacher and staff are available at the beginning and end of the school day to speak to parents informally.
- The performance of teachers is checked regularly. Support is provided for any who may be struggling. All teachers have targets for improvement and these are linked to pay rises. Governors and an external adviser check on the progress of the headteacher. Her targets are also linked to salary progression. Information about the performance of teachers is regularly communicated to governors.
- Teachers are responsible for the progress of pupils in more than one subject because the school is very small. There are plans to delegate more responsibilities to other members of staff in the current academic year. The headteacher, as leader of mathematics, has identified that pupils, especially the most able, do not have enough opportunities to develop and apply their skills in mathematics. Leaders have also correctly identified that the school's marking policy is not being consistently applied.
- Pupils benefit from having an attractive, well-stocked library from which they can borrow books. The library displays are of a high standard.
- The local authority has supported the school in raising achievement. The school benefit from support from the personnel department.
- The very few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have increased the number of visits they make to the school. They report their findings to the governing body and make recommendations for improvement. Their individual skills are used well. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They challenge the headteacher by asking searching questions. The school's budget is well managed. The governor responsible for finance makes regular visits to the school to ensure that spending is within the limits set. A wide range of training has helped the governing body to carry out its duties more effectively. Governors have established a clear link between teachers' performance and their pay. Governors know how the funding for pupil premium

and primary sport is spent, and they are aware of its impact. They make sure that all national safeguarding requirements are met.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Even when teaching is sometimes less engaging, pupils continue to apply themselves to the task in hand.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They behave well at lunchtime and as they move round the school. There is no litter. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility; for example, by looking after equipment and putting it away after playtime.
- There have been no exclusions. The school keeps records of incidents of poor behaviour. These have reduced significantly over the past year. Pupils understand that their behaviour has consequences.
- Pupils say, and their parents agree, that behaviour is good. Any poor behaviour is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils develop a clear understanding about right and wrong, helped by activities such as an assembly that focused on not pre-judging people by what you see on the outside.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils want to come to school because they enjoy learning. Punctuality is good.
- Relationships within the school are warm and caring. There is a culture of teamwork and co-operation. Even the very youngest children play and work collaboratively.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The pupils were unanimous that there is no bullying in the school. Parents agree. Most pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using computers and the internet. Pupils know how to be safe beyond the school gates; for example, not to play near railway lines or by the river.
- Pupils say there is no racism, and this is supported by the school's records. They say no bad language is used in the school. All pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. Discrimination is not tolerated.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers routinely plan activities at the right level of difficulty to match pupils' different abilities. As a result, pupils make good progress. Teachers use the information from previous classes to plan suitable work.
- Pupils apply themselves to the tasks set. They are respectful to all the adults in the school. The classrooms are bright and displays celebrate pupils' work. As a result, pupils have good attitudes to learning and this helps them to make good progress.
- Homework is set regularly. Pupils are encouraged to read, learn spellings and multiplication tables on a weekly basis. Other homework – for example, researching about Italy – is done fortnightly. Parents say that pupils are willing to do homework.
- There is an effective approach to the teaching of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) across the whole school. As a result, pupils are able to apply their phonic skills to the reading and writing of unfamiliar words. Reading is taught well. Pupils make good progress and enjoy reading. One said, 'I love reading. Reading makes a story come to life in your brain.' All pupils can talk about their favourite books and explain their reasons, such as, 'I like *Horrid Henry* because he is naughty.'
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs have the support they need to do well. Teaching assistants are used well to help these pupils and ensure that their progress is as good as

their classmates.

- Teachers mark work regularly, but not always in an effective way that shows pupils how they can improve it. Nor do teachers check that pupils respond to advice where it is given. This restricts the progress pupils make.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop and apply their skills. Consequently, in some classes, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is not always as rapid as it could be. Teachers and other adults do not check on their understanding by asking searching questions, and they do not always pose questions that prompt these pupils to think more deeply. The most-able pupils commented that work is sometimes too easy.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils make good progress across the school. In 2013, more pupils than nationally achieved expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1. The numbers achieving the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics were greater than found nationally. Attainment in all subjects has been above the national average for the last two years.
- The work seen in pupils' books confirms a picture of the good progress pupils are making throughout the school.
- All pupils achieved the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2012 and 2013. Outcomes for 2014 are also high. This is because phonics is taught systematically and well across the whole school.
- The majority of pupils leave the school with skills and abilities above those expected for their age. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Girls do particularly well in writing.
- The very small number of pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs make similarly good progress to their classmates.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities typical for their age. The majority enter Year 1 with a good level of development in all areas of learning. This proportion has been consistently above the national average for the last three years.
- The provision for early years is well run. The school and the local nursery work effectively together to prepare the children well for school. As a result, children settle quickly into school routines. The school is able to use the accurate assessments made in the nursery to plan activities which meet the needs of the children. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the education of their children.
- Teaching is good and, as a result, children make good progress. Teachers encourage children to reflect on what is right through good links between areas of learning. For example, 'Goldilocks' came to visit. During a question and answer session, the children said she should say sorry to the bears for eating their porridge.
- Children are able to concentrate and persevere. They are encouraged to work things out for themselves and to explain their thinking; for example, one child weighing sand said, 'This side is lower because it is heavier.' When comparing objects, a child said, 'This is heavier because it is bigger.' The teacher challenged the child by asking him if all big objects were heavy. She gave the child two objects, a small, heavy stone and a larger ping pong ball. The child considered the problem and said, 'The stone is heavier

because it's hard.'

- Children are encouraged to be safe and to develop a sense of responsibility. The teacher reminded them that after rain, some wooden decking may be slippery. Children take it in turns to 'monitor' the outside space and check that it is safe.
- Behaviour is good because staff set clear expectations. Children want to learn, and enjoy being at school. They are safe and secure.

## 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>	109451
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	448391

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	Vanessa Coleman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2010
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