

Five Acres Primary School

Blackthorn Road, Ambrosden, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX25 2SN

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Achievement has declined since the last inspection. It has now stabilised but requires improvement to become good again, largely because staff expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Leadership is not driving improvement because the headteacher does too much himself, and other leaders do not play a big enough role in improving teaching.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Leaders' actions to improve weaker teaching have not been fully effective.
- Standards of pupils' presentation and handwriting are inconsistent and are not high enough overall.
- The curriculum is not broad and balanced because there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn about subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour for the achievement of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- All staff provide high quality care for all pupils, including those who are new to the school.
- Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught well and make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy learning.
- The school has effective systems to ensure pupils are safe.
- Pupils feel happy and safe at school, and parents acknowledge this readily.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons, four of which were joint observations with the headteacher or the assistant headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of shorter visits to classes and listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 reading.
- Pupils' work from the current and previous academic year was scrutinised.
- The school's information on pupils' progress was analysed.
- Meetings were held with four members of the governing body, members of staff and a group of pupils from Years 5 and 6. A telephone conversation also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- The team took account of one letter from a parent and 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and analysed 34 staff questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors evaluated information on the school website and scrutinised a range of school documentation, including school action plans and priorities, leaders' self evaluations, minutes of school meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Louise Adams, Lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

Janet Pearce

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lucy Maughan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Five Acres is a larger than average primary school.
- There are two classes in each year group, except Year 2, which has one class. Early years children attend part-time.
- Approximately 40% of pupils come from service families, resulting in significantly higher mobility than the national average.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding is below average. This funding is provided for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those supported at school action, school action plus, and with a statement of special educational needs, is slightly higher than the national average.
- Since the previous inspection, in 2013, the primary school merged with the foundation stage school. The foundation stage school was previously inspected by Ofsted in January 2013 and was deemed to be good.
- The breakfast and after-school club, which are held in the school, are managed by a separate body and have not been subject to this inspection.
- This school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school meets the current government floor standards for pupils' achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and raise achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - making sure all learning time is used effectively
 - raising expectations of pupils' presentation and the quality of their work
 - matching activities correctly to meet the needs of all pupils
 - being clear about what pupils need to learn in order to make good progress.
- Ensure the curriculum fully meets pupils' needs, particularly for boys, by:
 - making sure pupils have good opportunities to learn all subjects and that materials chosen appeal to boys as well as girls
 - planning opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and the wider world.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - developing senior leaders' skills so that they can all help to improve teaching
 - making better use of information about teachers' impact on pupils' achievement when monitoring their performance
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - developing governors' understanding of their role.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders do not have an accurate view of how well pupils are doing at the school. They have taken the high mobility of pupils too much into account to explain why progress is not good, which has resulted in teachers, leaders and governors not having high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The governing body and headteacher have not been effective in improving leadership capacity. This means that although the headteacher has taken some effective action to tackle the decline in standards, improvements are not happening quickly enough. The recently appointed senior leadership team of three assistant headteachers has the potential to help the school to improve, but their development needs to be accelerated so they can assist the headteacher with monitoring and improving teaching.
- The care for pupils is a significant strength. The headteacher, who knows the name of each pupil and their personal situation, expects his staff to provide high quality support for all the pupils they encounter. Consequently, all adults have supportive and caring relationships with the pupils, and demonstrate a strong awareness of the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics have plans for improving their areas of responsibility, but these do not focus enough on improving teaching.
- Leaders' feedback to teachers about their teaching identifies strengths and weaknesses in their practice. However, leaders do not look carefully enough at the work pupils are doing in books and their progress over time when judging the overall quality of teaching.
- The school plans carefully how the pupil premium grant is used and is able to show that the funding has helped many disadvantaged pupils to make accelerated progress. The funding is used, for example, to provide one-to-one tuition for those pupils who need to catch up in reading.
- Leaders have rightly focused on improving pupils' literacy, in particular in writing and grammar, but this is not yet resulting in enough gains in end-of-year assessment tests because ground remains to be made up.
- The curriculum requires improvement because it does not give sufficient breadth of opportunity for pupils to study subjects such as science and design technology. Opportunities are missed for engaging boys and there are not enough experiences of different cultures to equip pupils for life in the modern world and in modern Britain. The schools' work to promote equality of opportunity is not effective because the curriculum does not enable pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects.
- Spiritual, moral and social development is developed well. The assemblies, which are often led by the headteacher, provide regular discussion and reflection time for pupils to develop an increased awareness and understanding of values and attitudes, such as respect for each other and trust. However, these valuable messages are not always reiterated or extended in class.
- The special educational needs coordinator is effective in providing relevant and timely support to pupils, in both academic and personal support. As a result, some pupils with additional needs make more progress than expected. This is not consistent because teachers' practice is not always strong enough in supporting these pupils.
- The government funding to promote sport supports achievement well in physical education. Increasing numbers of pupils participate in sporting activities, including cheerleading, tag rugby and cross-country, as a result of the school's involvement with the North Oxfordshire School Sport Partnership. The use of a sports coach to develop teachers' skills has the potential to raise standards, but is at an early stage.
- When the headteacher has strong evidence of teacher underperformance, he takes action to tackle this, but information about teachers' impact on pupils' achievement is not always used quickly enough to nip problems with teaching in the bud early.
- Parents who responded were very positive about all aspects of the school and the overwhelming majority would recommend the school to other parents.
- The local authority has not had regular engagement with the school. Recently, a local authority advisor completed an analysis of information about pupils' achievements, identifying the school to be at risk of requiring improvement. This was shared with the headteacher but no further action has been taken.
- The school meets statutory requirements for safer recruitment, including checks on staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very supportive of the school and has a secure understanding of its context. Governors work hard to check the impact of the school's work on pupils' progress but are not skilled enough at asking the right questions to check that what school leaders are telling them is accurate. Newly appointed governors have undertaken training and their knowledge is helping all governors to become more aware of what is needed for the governing body to be more effective. At present, there is insufficient knowledge and focus to improve as quickly as is required. Governors are aware of how

teachers' performance is monitored but have not checked that rises in salary are linked to better performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and pay attention to what the teacher says. They are cooperative when working together and listen respectfully to each other.
- Pupils are respectful to adults and demonstrate good manners, in and around the school. Inspectors commented on how frequently pupils held doors open for them and other adults.
- Pupils' play is lively but not overly boisterous, and their movement around school is generally sensible and appropriate, taking account of the school rules.
- The relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. For pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable, systems are in place to make sure that all adults working with those pupils know the best way to manage their specific behaviour.
- There have been few incidents of racism and bullying; when these have occurred, they have been managed well by the school and action has been taken to ensure they do not recur. Pupils have a strong understanding of the dangers of bullying and the potential impact on their well-being and learning.
- Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and at the beginning of lessons.
- Most pupils adhere to the uniform code and wear their uniform with pride.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school takes safeguarding seriously. All adults fully understand their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff training records are up to date and there are rigorous systems for tackling concerns and making sure issues are followed up.
- Attendance is slightly below the national average, but the school is monitoring this rigorously and taking action which is resulting in improvements.
- The pupils comment that they feel safe and are confident about talking to teachers and leaders if they have concerns.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good in all year groups. Too much teaching time is lost because some teachers provide activities which keep the pupils busy but do not help them to learn enough. This is more frequently the case for pupils in Years 3 and 4, meaning that progress in the initial phases of Key Stage 2 falters.
- Some teachers plan and teach lessons which match activities well to pupils' varied abilities, so that pupils' learning in lessons and over time, as evident in their books, is good. These features are more regularly apparent in the teaching of younger pupils and in the oldest year groups. More able pupils are not always provided with sufficient challenge in lessons.
- Strategies to teach reading are effective. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are taught the skills of linking letters to sounds (phonics), reading and forming letters through short frequent sessions, working in small groups. Pupils in all year groups are encouraged to develop a love of reading. Teachers and adults choose interesting, child-friendly stories and texts for pupils to listen or respond to. As a result, achievement in reading is consistently in line with the national average.
- Teaching of writing has rightly been a priority for the school because of previous low attainment and progress. Writing and grammar are taught explicitly and pupils now have more opportunities to write longer pieces, which are often developed over a series of lessons. A good example of this was a Year 6 English lesson, where the teacher continued descriptions from the previous day, with pupils editing and improving their work, before evaluating what others had done.
- However, the teaching of handwriting is not consistently good enough and pupils' work is sometimes difficult to read. This has a detrimental effect on their learning because they cannot read what they have written. In some classes, pupils are not encouraged to take enough pride in their work.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable and requires improvement overall. Where it is good, teachers

match activities well to pupils' needs but, as with other teaching, this is not consistently the case, so that pupils sometimes waste time on work which is not at the correct level.

- Teaching assistants are effective and their time is well planned by teachers. Inspectors saw some teaching assistants using skilful questioning to help pupils to understand the learning. They work well with a range of pupils to support understanding, work and progress.
- Pupils' books seen during the inspection were marked up to date and in line with the school's policy.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement by the end of Key Stage 2 is not consistently good enough overall and in different subjects. It declined after the last inspection, but the school has taken action to prevent further deterioration.
- During Key Stage 2, progress and attainment in reading are good and remain consistently in line with national averages, whereas they vary too much between different year groups in mathematics and writing, so that progress and attainment are below average when pupils leave. Recent actions by the school are bringing improvement, but progress is not yet good enough.
- There is too much difference between the attainment of girls and boys, with boys consistently doing less well in all subjects at Key Stage 2. This is mainly associated with the choice of curriculum content where, for example, subjects chosen for writing do not always appeal enough to the boys.
- During Key Stage 1, pupils' achievement is good from their varied starting points and attainment, by the end of the key stage in reading, writing and mathematics, is consistently in line with national averages.
- The number of Year 1 pupils who reach the expected level in the phonics check is consistently well above the national average, reflecting the school's recent focus on good quality phonics teaching.
- During lessons, pupils make the best progress when they have a clear understanding of the purpose of their activities and are given accurate feedback during the lesson about how to improve. This happens more frequently in classes with more experienced teachers, and notably for younger pupils and those in the two oldest year-groups.
- More able pupils make good progress up to the end of Key Stage 1, but in Key Stage 2 they do not sustain the good progress because they are not routinely challenged to think hard and aim high.
- As with other pupils, those with special educational needs do not make as much progress as they should because some teachers do not match activities well enough to their needs during lessons.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those from service families make similar progress to other pupils by the end of Key Stage 2, with those from disadvantaged backgrounds being approximately a year behind other pupils in the school and pupils nationally in mathematics and English. The effective spending of the pupil premium grant means these gaps are closing.

The early years provision

is good

- The provision in the early years is good and the majority of children are ready for school by Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is strong. The leader carries out regular observations, often with the headteacher, to monitor practice and identify areas for improvement. She holds regular staff team meetings which are focused on improving provision.
- The learning opportunities provided for children are purposeful and engaging. In one session, the teacher worked with a small group to count lorries parked on a car-parking mat. The activity was carefully matched to the children's different abilities and was extended to subtraction for the children who could learn more.
- Children in the early years make more progress than is typical and many of the pupils who join the school below or at the typical levels make good progress
- Children are confident in choosing activities and the expectations are clear for sharing, taking turns and including other children. During some sand-play, the children were carefully 'cleaning the sand' by taking out any small pieces of rubbish. They worked cooperatively to share out the pots with small holes so they could all sift the sand and were able to explain why this would work.
- Most adults lead purposeful activities which helped the children to make progress. In one session, a teacher successfully managed 12 pupils using the same road mat to each plan out their part of the road, thinking about how they could all link their areas and what challenges they might encounter.
- The children feel happy and safe. They are keen to spend time with adults but most are equally happy to spend time with other pupils or on their own. The children behave well, moving calmly and confidently

around the areas, including moving from one Reception class to another.

- Children are supported well in their transition between the Nursery and Reception. They are also supported well in their move to Year 1 because they spend time getting to know their new classroom and teachers. Parents were very positive in their feedback about the school and about how much care is taken to make sure the children settle quickly and are happy.

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	123006
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	447799
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	323
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew King
Headteacher	Darrell Wood
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 December 2011
Telephone number	01869 253193
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