

Pepper Hill School

Kingsfold, Bradville, Milton Keynes, MK13 7BQ

Inspection dates 13–14 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The senior leadership team and governors, with effective support from the local authority, have made significant and necessary changes to the school. All of these have helped to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils, those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress.
- The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers develop good learning relationships with pupils. They effectively encourage them to learn from each other in small groups.
- Pupils feel safe and behaviour is good. Pupils are fully taking on board the school's new 'proud' code of conduct. This is contributing well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Since the recent improvements to the provision in the early years, children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress.
- Governors effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities and diligently hold leaders to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children, particularly the most able, are not always given enough time to explore and extend their own ideas in the early years provision.
- Some of the worksheets used limit the amount that the most able pupils can write in subjects other than in English.
- A few members of staff are not yet fully confident in supporting those pupils who are at the early stages of reading.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons. Three were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors observed a whole-school assembly. They made short visits to observe pupils receiving extra help and support in small groups.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading in Years 1 and 2. They looked at a range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation that included data on pupils' progress and achievement, minutes of governing body meetings, the school's own evaluation of its performance, and information relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- An event for parents called 'Bring Your Mum and Dad to School Day' took place on the second day of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the school day and during the parents' event on the second day of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the 23 responses from the staff questionnaires. There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to provide evidence of the opinions of parents and carers.

Inspection team

Sharona Semlali, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Angela Dawson

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized school.
- The school shares the site with a children's centre which is managed by the local authority and is subject to a separate inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the teaching staff and leadership team. In September 2013 the school was led by two temporary interim headteachers who shared the role. In January 2014 the current headteacher took up the interim headteacher post and became the substantive headteacher when the school was federated with Stanton School in May 2014. She is the headteacher of both schools.
- The deputy headteacher was appointed in April 2014.
- The early years provision consists of a part-time morning and afternoon Nursery and two full-time Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional funding to support those eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language is above average. The three main languages spoken are Polish, Tamil and Somali.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that children in the early years, particularly the most able, are given sufficient time to explore and develop their own ideas.
- Make sure that worksheets used in lessons other than English enable the most able pupils to practise writing at length and develop their skills.
- Ensure that all staff are given the appropriate training so they can fully support those at the early stages of reading.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the leadership team within the federation have made considerable changes and essential improvements to all aspects of the school's work, particularly the learning environment. This is because it had started to decline. In a short space of time, they have effectively managed the instability in teaching while still ensuring that pupils achieve well.
- The headteacher has strengthened the systems for managing the performance of teachers and support staff. Senior leaders have successfully addressed most of the weaknesses in teaching. They have done this by giving staff extra training, being coached by other leaders in the federation and getting them to see good and outstanding practice in other settings.
- Leaders in charge of subjects are enthusiastic and passionate and have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They fully participate in checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- Additional funding helps to provide additional training for staff as well as resources and extra adult support for disadvantaged pupils. This is effectively helping to reduce the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school. This is one way in which the school demonstrates its commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for its pupils. It also fosters good relations and tackles discrimination.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is taught well through exciting projects. For example, children in the Reception classes are proud of the Diva lamps they made when they looked at different celebrations such as Diwali. It contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and actively promotes British values.
- Good use is made of the primary sports funding to purchase specialist coaches and extra resources. This is helping teachers to feel more confident to teach this subject. Pupils are more motivated and eager to join in sports beyond the school day.
- The school is working well to foster good relationships between the two schools in the federation. Staff from across the schools are working closely together and this is helping to drive improvement.
- School leaders are establishing good relationships with parents. The 'Bring Your Mum or Dad to School' event was very successful. Parents spoken to at the time this was happening shared how they found it useful.
- The local authority has strongly impacted on the school's success. For example, it helped to ensure that that the school's data is accurate. Local authority staff work closely with the governing body and senior team and gave effective support through the federation process.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear picture of the data on the school's performance and understand how well the school is performing in comparison to others. Senior and middle leaders provide detailed and informative reports to them about different aspects of the school's work. Governors know how the school has tackled and addressed underperformance and weaknesses in teaching. They understand how the school links teachers' pay to their performance.
 - Governors closely monitor the school's finances, which are healthy. This includes keeping regular checks on the spending and impact of the sports and pupil funding.
 - Governors undertake regular health and safety walks around the school. They ensure that all safeguarding meets statutory requirements so that pupils are kept safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They show respect and are courteous in their communication to others. They often say, 'please', 'thank you' and 'excuse me'. Pupils are honest about their feelings and are open minded to the views and opinions of others. This is part of the school's code of conduct of being 'Proud'. Pupils enjoy explaining what each letter represents in the word 'Proud' and how this reflects the school's values.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because pupils' attitudes to learning are not exemplary across all classes.
- Assemblies reinforce the school code of conduct and give pupils a chance to reflect, as well as helping them to develop a strong sense of belonging to the school community. The whole school focuses on a

'value of the month'. 'Teamwork' was promoted at the time of the inspection. All of this helps to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well.

- Pupils clearly understand what is meant by bullying. They say that it does happen, occasionally, in the form of name calling but feel that it always gets sorted out by the adults.
- During break and lunch times, pupils sensibly move around the school. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, such as being class monitors.
- Pupils are very positive about the introduction of the attendance awards. They are always eager to find out which group is the 'class of the week'. As a result, attendance has improved recently and is now broadly average.
- Breakfast club helps to foster friendships and gives pupils a settled start to their day.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school's systems ensure that all adults, including visitors, are checked and monitored rigorously.
- Risk assessments are thorough and up to date, and this helps to ensure that the site is safe for pupils. Child protection training is up to date for all staff.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. They are confident that staff will help them if they have a falling out with their friends or have a particular worry. They say adults are helpful and kind.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, particularly when using the internet. They refer to 'Sid's top five rules' which provide clear guidance for staying safe.
- Staff and parents spoken to say that pupils behave well, and the inspection findings support this.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good. This is evidenced from pupils' progress in their work and from the standards achieved by the end of Year 2.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Pupils have sufficient time to practise solving problems using their mental calculations. Teachers ensure that pupils have a range of useful resources that help them to understand the basic concepts, such as division.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils are applying their mathematical skills in a range of subjects. For example, this was seen in the work from the recent mathematics week that included a focus on looking at this subject through art. The pupils' 'topic books' show how they confidently used bar graphs to analyse weather patterns.
- Pupils' work shows that they are practising their writing skills in subjects other than in English. All work is marked in detail and it helps pupils know how to improve. However, some of the worksheets restrict the amount of writing that pupils can produce and this does not give them enough opportunity to extend their writing skills further, particular the most able pupils.
- Teachers encourage pupils to learn from each other through their discussions. They often reinforce and model the correct and specific vocabulary for a subject by getting pupils to repeat what they have said. They often use the phrase, 'my turn, your turn', which pupils find helpful.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. They give effective and targeted support to individuals and to pupils in small groups. They make sure that those with special educational needs have good opportunities to working alongside their peers in the class wherever possible.
- School leaders have revamped the library and pupils enjoy using it. They are eager to read and excitedly talk about the books they read at home and at school. However, a few pupils who are at the early stages of reading do not accurately use phonics (the sounds that letters make) to read unfamiliar words. This is because some of the staff are not fully confident in teaching phonics.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are generally below levels typical for their age. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, and are improving. Work in pupils' books shows they also make good progress in other subjects such as science, religious education, history and geography.
- School leaders have recently introduced a 'word of the week'. This is helping pupils to improve their

understanding and use of ambitious words. They have also introduced 'everyone writes week', where time is set aside for pupils throughout the school to practise their writing skills on a theme set by staff. The theme for all pupils was 'a circus'. This was successful as it helped to stimulate pupils' ideas for writing instructions and poems for a real purpose.

- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. This is because their needs are identified at an early stage and a personalised support plan is put into place quickly. Pupils' progress with these plans is assessed regularly. Good use is made of the expertise of any relevant external agency, if needed.
- Those pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well. If a pupil is at the very early stages of learning to speak English, leaders assess their learning needs and this information is used well to inform teachers' planning. This ensures that teachers are clear about the next steps needed to improve pupils' acquisition of English.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including those from minority ethnic groups, achieve well.
- The attainment gap between the disadvantaged pupils and their classmates is narrowing quickly, particularly in reading and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils are also catching up with other pupils nationally as a result of the school's effective use of additional funding.
- In 2014, attainment for the most able pupils was above average in reading. It was broadly average in mathematics and slightly below average in writing. Although these pupils do achieve well overall, their progress in writing sometimes slows because some of the worksheets used do not enable them to develop their writing skills as much as possible. There is not always enough space for them to write and express their ideas so they can stretch themselves further in this area.

The early years provision

is good

- The new leadership of the early years provision is good. They have acted quickly to make drastic changes in the provision in all of the indoor and outdoor learning areas. This has helped to improve significantly the quality of teaching and children's achievement, which are now good. In the past, some children have not been ready to enter Year 1 at the end of Reception. Currently, all children in Nursery and the Reception classes are making good progress.
- To aid children's transition into Nursery, strong links are made with parents and the local children's centre. Teachers effectively use any information gathered at this time to inform their planning, and this forms part of the children's planned 'learning journey'. All of this helps them to know the children well before they start school and know what extra support may be needed.
- The early years provision provides a rich language and number environment with signs and questions that help to challenge pupils' thinking and language skills. In the outdoor areas, children enjoy making cakes from mud in the mud kitchen. Others are proud of the Mendhi patterns they make. However, sometimes children, particularly the most able, are not given enough time to explore and extend their own ideas, so that their thinking skills can be challenged further.
- Children are safe and confident. Behaviour is good. They are settled and know the daily routines well. Children are happy and respond well to all of the adults. They show respect towards each other as they play together with the different toys and resources.

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	110330
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	443771

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Slee
Headteacher	Helen Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 October 2010
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