

Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England Primary School

Vernham Dean, Andover, SP11 0JY

Inspection dates 28–29 January 2015

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 headteacher, supported well by other staff, has ensured that the school has improved consistently since the previous inspection.
- Attainment in early years is above what is typically expected for Reception children and is above average for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- There is good provision for children in early years.
- Pupils, including the most able, make good progress, particularly in mathematics and reading.
- The very few pupils in receipt of additional funding and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs share in the good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers motivate pupils so that they learn well, and teaching assistants provide good support.
- Pupils behave very well. They feel very safe in school and attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning systematically and rigorously. This has helped to improve teaching.
- Governors are active, supportive and constructively challenging in helping the leadership to move the school forwards.
- Pupils enjoy the good range of clubs, regular visits and other activities which the school offers. Good links with other local schools provide opportunities for pupils to achieve well.
- The school provides excellent care and support for all pupils.
- The quality of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Parents are very supportive of what the school provides for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although pupils make good progress in writing, the rate of progress is not as rapid as in other subjects. This is partly because pupils get fewer opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Teachers do not always provide pupils with activities challenging enough to enable them to achieve their best.
- Staff do not use pupils' targets sufficiently in lessons and do not give enough information in their marking to show pupils how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons taught by four teachers and a teaching assistant. The inspector carried out three of the observations jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' work.
- The inspector held meetings with a group of pupils, the headteacher, other staff and four members of the governing body. He also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 37 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and the nine responses to questionnaires which staff completed. The inspector also took account of the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents which the school provided. These included the school's plan for improvement, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's checking of its own work, information about the progress of pupils currently in the school and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of the pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, at 7%, is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils entitled to pupil premium funding, at 6%, is much lower than the national average. There are very few in Year 6 and none in some other year groups. The pupil premium is additional funding for those children known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There are relatively few pupils in each group, so all pupils from Reception up to Year 6 are taught in mixed-age classes. The children in early years attend full time.
- There were some significant changes in teaching staff at the start of the current school year, and several staff also changed their positions of responsibility.
- The headteacher has provided regular support for another local school which has experienced underperformance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to make more of it outstanding by:
 - making better use of pupils' targets and improving marking so that it consistently shows pupils precisely how they can improve their work
 - making sure that activities in lessons always have sufficient challenge so that all pupils can achieve their full potential in every lesson.
- Further raise attainment and improve progress in writing by making sure that pupils write more and in greater depth in subjects other than English, in order to match the progress they make in English lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school. He has managed recent staff changes well, and all staff support his commitment to further improvement.
- The school's success in strengthening achievement and making other improvements since the previous inspection show that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- The school's leadership, supported by the governing body, understands the strengths of the school well and identifies the right areas for development in the school's improvement planning.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning rigorously and accurately.
- The leadership ensures that staff are accountable for pupils' progress. Teachers' pay is linked to their responsibilities and to the achievement of pupils.
- The local authority is confident in the ability of the school to do well for its pupils. Therefore, it offers the school low-key support. This is partly to help develop the leadership skills of those supporting the headteacher and to help integrate new staff into school for the current school year. This has been very successful. The local authority also uses the headteacher for education projects and to support another school within the authority regularly.
- The school meets all safeguarding requirements well. Staff are up to date in their knowledge of child protection procedures and the school teaches pupils and their parents key aspects such as safe use of the internet.
- The school is rightly proud of its inclusive approach, making sure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds feel well supported. There is no discrimination. All pupils grasp the opportunity that the school gives them to do well.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The leadership works very successfully to make pupils reflective and well-rounded citizens within a strong Christian ethos. The inspector observed assemblies in which pupils thought about issues like friendship. Pupils' work also shows pupils think about spiritual issues, such as work by Year 2 on 'Light as a symbol' and their reflections in 'special books'.
- Pupils enjoy the school's curriculum, which teaches core skills effectively and includes a range of subjects which pupils describe as 'fun'. Both music and sport have a high profile in the school. The leadership has used the sport funding well, for example in buying in specialist sports expertise which has helped to increase staff skills and opportunities for pupils. As a result, there has been increased pupil participation in sports and some notable successes in competitive sport.
- Pupils also enjoy the good range of visits, for example to London. They particularly enjoy the residential visit to the Isle of Wight.
- The school teaches concepts relevant to life in modern Britain well. Teachers encourage pupils to give their opinions and to put forward their ideas on how things should be done in school. Pupils are very tolerant of each other and they enjoy taking on responsibility for aspects such as improving the local environment. There is a strong culture in the school of pupils helping others, for example through raising money for charity.
- The school is very outgoing. This is evident, for example, in the links pupils have established with a school in Japan. The leadership is currently considering links with schools in more countries.
- The school has productive links with other local schools. These benefit staff, through opportunities for joint staff development and getting a uniform view on what standards of work should be expected from pupils. Pupils also profit from the links. For example, they use some facilities in the local secondary school and students from the secondary school gave a presentation about their school to Vernham Dean's pupils.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils. Nevertheless, the school has spent the relevant funding well, providing extra support where needed. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress and also benefit in terms of personal development.
- Parents are mostly very supportive of the school and appreciate what it provides. This was evident from the online survey and also the school's own survey of parents.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has been strengthened since the previous inspection. By their own admission, governors are now more confident in expecting the leadership to justify its policies in areas such as the deployment of staff and resourcing. Governors are active in school, checking on progress and supporting school events. They use assessment data confidently and have a good understanding of how well the different groups of pupils do compared with the performance of pupils nationally. They also understand the strengths in the teaching and how the school has improved it and can build on these

strengths further. Governors have evaluated the positive impact of primary sport funding and they have also made sensible decisions on the funding available for the few disadvantaged pupils in the school. Governors understand their responsibilities for aspects such as safeguarding. They rigorously oversee the performance management process for staff in the school, including how their salary is linked to pupils' progress. Governors are very enthusiastic about their school, but also hold it to account as part of the process of supporting the leadership's drive for excellence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They enjoy school, which is partly why attendance is above average and has been for some time.
- Pupils are very courteous to visitors and talk openly and honestly about their experiences at school. They enjoy both their learning and the good range of opportunities outside lessons to take part in sports and other activities such as singing and gardening.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and this is a significant factor in their good progress. Just occasionally they say that they find the work quite easy and not all pupils find their targets very useful. However, they respect and like their teachers and enjoy the friendly nature of the school.
- Pupils like taking responsibility and they speak very proudly about their school council.
- Behaviour is very good around the school, despite some occasional boisterousness in the playground when games are in full swing. Occasionally some pupils 'switch off' in lessons, which is why behaviour is not outstanding. Pupils are insistent that there is no real bullying of any type in the school, either physical or verbal, and school records confirm that the school is a very well-ordered community.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. All parents report that pupils feel very safe in school. Those pupils whom the inspector spoke to said the same thing. Possible issues to do with safety are discussed in assemblies, in lessons and in pupils' work.
- The school's safety procedures, and the school site, are very secure. The checks on staff working at the school are rigorous, with comprehensive secure records maintained. Systems to control access to the school are very effective.
- As at the previous inspection, pupils enjoy outstanding care and support. Pupils know exactly to whom they should turn if they need support or advice. The school maintains very good links with those agencies outside the school which it has to contact occasionally. There are secure procedures for ensuring good attendance. The school keeps records on safety issues and updates them as appropriate.

The quality of teaching is good

- School records show that teaching has been consistently good over time. The leadership has managed the recent changes in staffing effectively so that pupils' progress has not suffered. Evidence gained during the inspection, particularly from talking to staff and pupils and from looking closely at pupils' work, confirmed the good quality of the teaching.
- Parents also believe that teaching is good.
- Teachers are successful in motivating pupils to want to learn. This is demonstrated when they work as a whole class, on their own or in small groups. When in groups they collaborate very well with each other. In lessons, for example, pupils work out the solutions to mathematical problems together.
- Reading sessions are managed very effectively, taking advantage of older pupils' enjoyment of reading a range of fiction and non-fiction books.
- Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons. Often they work with a group of pupils of varying levels of ability. They use a range of resources and methods which engages pupils' interests and helps pupils to learn quickly.
- Staff are successful in helping the few disadvantaged pupils in the school make good progress in lessons, being very aware of their individual needs.
- Teachers have benefited from several opportunities to develop their skills further, including having opportunities to learn from each other. The leadership has, for example, developed their confidence in teaching higher-level mathematics.
- Teaching has had a very positive impact on the development of literacy, reading and mathematics. The

teaching of writing has improved since the previous inspection and, as a result, progress in writing is now more secure. However, it is not as rapid in other subjects, mainly because pupils get limited opportunities to write more and in greater depth when not in English lessons. This means, for example, that written work in topics based around history and geography is not of the same standard as work done in English lessons. The school recognises this as an aspect for further development.

- Teachers' marking is often constructive in highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work, and pupils confirm this. However, it is not always as thorough or consistent in quality and does not always give enough guidance to pupils on how exactly they can improve their work. Similarly, staff do not make much use of pupils' personal targets in lessons, which is why some pupils are quite vague about the targets.
- Teachers usually make sure that the most-able pupils learn well. These pupils also get other opportunities to do quite challenging work, for example in mathematics, and they enjoy this. However, occasionally, the activities in lessons do not ensure that pupils move on to more challenging tasks early enough to maximise their progress. This is why teaching is not outstanding.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The inspector looked at a lot of pupils' work during the inspection. This showed good progress over time, with pupils achieving well in a range of writing in English, and making good progress in mathematics.
- Attainment in phonics (the linking of letters and sounds) is well above average. This was confirmed by the excellent performance of both boys and girls in the national phonic check at the end of Year 1. The inspector also saw this in lessons, with younger pupils rapidly reinforcing and extending their language skills.
- Attainment in reading is high. Many pupils read at levels well above the national average. They read confidently and accurately and enjoy talking about their reading.
- Attainment in speaking and listening is well above average. Pupils speak articulately and with confidence. This is evident in assemblies, in lessons and when they talk not just to staff but to adult visitors.
- Attainment in mathematics is above average. Many pupils are adept at working out mathematical problems and enjoy the process.
- The school's own assessments and national test results confirm the school's success in preparing pupils well for the next stage of their education when they leave school at the end of Year 6. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has been consistently above, and often well above, average for several years. It has also been above average in the assessments for Year 6 pupils, although there have been slight variations in recent tests due to the different ability levels within small cohorts of pupils year on year.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. Many attain Level 3 by the end of Year 2, and Levels 5 or 6 by the end of Year 6. Results in reading, in particular, have been significantly above average.
- The few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similarly good progress from their starting points.
- There are too few disadvantaged pupils to compare their attainment without identifying individual pupils. However, these pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates, which is better than that of other pupils nationally.
- Although attainment in writing is above average and many pupils make good progress in writing, it is not as rapid as in reading and mathematics. This is partly because there are fewer opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their writing skills. Although most parents believe that pupils achieve well, this is a reason why achievement overall is not outstanding.

The early years provision is good

- Children in Reception get a very good start to their education in the school. Most have been to a nursery or pre-school and they join with skills and knowledge above those typical for their age. Good leadership and high expectations in Reception ensure that they make good progress.
- By the time they leave Reception, children have skills well above those typical for their age, in reading, writing, number, their understanding of the world and all aspects of their personal and social development. They are very well prepared for their transfer to Year 1.
- Sometimes the Reception children work as a group and sometimes alongside some Year 1 pupils. In both cases this is very effective. Children use the outside area and resources well, and their classroom is a

stimulating learning environment in which they feel very safe, as their parents attest.

- The children behave very well and are keen to learn. They learn classroom routines very quickly and cooperate well.
- Leadership of early years is good. Staff regularly assess the children's progress and keep good records and examples of work to show how quickly most of the children have progressed.
- Teaching is good because staff have high expectations, whatever activities the children are doing. The children learn key skills, such as writing, quickly. They also listen well and speak very confidently. Children are keen to explain to visitors what they are doing.
- Reception staff ensure that there are good relationships with parents, who are welcomed into the school. There are also good links with a local pre-school, which help to ensure a smooth transition for children between the two settings.
- Although children learn and play constructively, occasionally they miss opportunities to extend their learning because they are busy with activities in the outside area.

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	116321
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	448788

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Nicoll
Headteacher	Martin Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	30 June–1 July 2010
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