

Mrs Bland's Infant School

Jordans Lane, Reading, RG7 3LP

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school with drive and enthusiasm. Staff share the senior leaders' vision for the school and, as a result, the school's teaching and the pupils' achievement have consistently improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good. As a result, pupils' achievement has also improved to good levels.
- Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning make a strong contribution to their progress.
- The early years' provision is outstanding in supporting children's rapid development and learning.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils of all abilities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well through the range of subjects taught. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe in school because adults provide high quality guidance and support. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent. The school is a happy and exciting place to learn.
- Governors are fully involved in monitoring all aspects of the school's work. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Governors hold the staff to account effectively for their impact on pupils' progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers have the highest expectations for the quality of pupils' written work.
- Pupils' handwriting is not always legible and sometimes their work is untidy.
- Recently appointed middle leaders are not fully effective in raising pupils' achievement to outstanding levels.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons or part lessons. Seven of these observations took place jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other members, as well as a representative from the local authority. Inspectors also held informal discussions with a number of parents.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance and pupils' work in their books.
- In planning and carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 64 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as two letters and three written responses to Parent View. They also considered 20 questionnaires completed by teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

David Harris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Claire Mirams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This infant school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is just below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- Over 80% of pupils are of White British heritage, which is well above average. About 5% of pupils come from Romany or Gypsy backgrounds, which is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- Since the last inspection there have been changes in leadership. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their responsibilities in September 2013.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education.
- The early years provision within the school's Reception classes is full time.
- The school runs a breakfast club which was included in this inspection. There is after-school provision on the school site, 'Funzone', but this is not managed by the school.
- There has been a high turnover of staff since the last inspection. Most classes are taught by teachers new to the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of middle leaders so that they are fully involved in improving the quality of learning and teaching in their subjects.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have the highest expectations of pupils' written work
 - handwriting is taught consistently across the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads well. Her uncompromising drive to raise standards, coupled with good quality training and development for staff, has brought about rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. Staff fully support her and feel part of a team. This ensures the school meets its aims of providing 'a positive learning environment which is inclusive for all children'.
- There have been a number of changes in leadership roles. Subject leaders and other middle leaders, some of whom have been appointed to their positions fairly recently, have considerable expertise in, and enthusiasm for, the areas for which they are responsible. They are not all, as yet, fully involved in conducting lesson observations or providing coaching for other staff in order to improve pupils' achievement to the highest levels.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used to good effect to increase pupils' participation in a range of different sports and physical activities such as gymnastics and football. The school employs a sports coach to provide professional development for staff and to widen the range of sports available for pupils.
- The curriculum is impressively broad and well balanced. It provides a range of good quality activities that promote enjoyment and a love of learning. A focus on reading has been successful in improving pupils' work not only in literacy but also across all subjects of the curriculum. Basic mathematical skills are well catered for using a range of interesting resources. A wide variety of activities, including school visits, have had a positive impact on pupils' achievement in writing. Many clubs, school trips and artistic and cultural events enhance the learning opportunities for pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils talked about their 'Forest School', where activities are often taught outdoors, with great enthusiasm.
- Teaching has improved, largely because staff are helped to improve their practice following observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work. Staff are clear that salary progression is linked to a review of their performance and improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to provide support for disadvantaged pupils so they achieve well. In addition to providing support in classrooms, the funding is used to help develop pupils' emotional and social skills. Consequently, these pupils grow in confidence and are better placed to succeed.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and tackles discrimination effectively. For example, the school takes positive steps to widen pupils' understanding of different cultures. Leaders ensure pupils understand British values such as democracy, and the need for rules in school and the wider community and mutual respect. For example, all pupils voted on Election Day for their school councillors and this helped to ensure they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Communications with parents are effective. Fostering good relationships is a shared responsibility for everybody in the school's community. For example, regular coffee mornings bring parents into the school and informative newsletters let them know what their children will be learning.
- There is a clear commitment to ensure equality of opportunity. All pupils, whatever their ability or background, have the chance to take part in all the school's activities and to achieve well.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements and are highly effective.
- The local authority has provided effective support and guidance to the school since the last inspection. This has been useful and constructive in supporting the improvements made.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body fulfils its duties well. Its committee structure and recording of meetings, and the actions taken, are effective.
- Governors provide a high level of support and challenge which is helping the school to improve further. Governors understand the school's performance information and how well the school's standards compare with other schools nationally and locally.
- The governing body receives regular reports about the quality of teaching. School leaders keep the governors up to date about what is happening in school. Consequently, the governors know what the school is doing to improve teaching. They ensure a clear link exists between pay and pupils' performance. The school does not tolerate weak teaching.
- The governing body monitors the school's finances closely, including the pupil premium and sport funding, to ensure that pupils benefit from the spending.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most pupils are keen to do well and they have positive attitudes to learning. They are attentive and well behaved during lessons and this has a significant impact on their good progress. Just occasionally, a few pupils become restless and lose concentration during lessons so that their progress slows.
- Around the school and when playing, pupils behave well. Pupils have good manners and talk happily with each other.
- Most parents who completed the online questionnaire feel that pupils are well behaved. Staff reinforce this positive view of pupils' typical levels of behaviour.
- The school manages behaviour well. School records show that incidents of very poor behaviour have declined over time.
- Attendance has improved recently and is now in line with the national average. This is because of the school's clear expectations, and pupils' and parents' growing understanding of the importance of good attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The site is very secure. Adults who work with the pupils are rigorously checked. Staff are well trained in child protection and safeguarding.
- Bullying is a very rare occurrence because of very good relationships between all members of the school community. Pupils have a very good understanding of different types of bullying. One pupil said 'we all respect each other'.
- Children learn how to keep themselves safe from such risks as fire and traffic. For example, a police community support worker led an assembly on road safety and taught the pupils how to keep themselves safe by respecting the rules.
- The school thinks ahead when taking pupils out on trips and visits; for example, when pupils visit the local forest all adults and pupils identify possible hazards. Safety is a key priority for the school and as a result pupils say they feel very safe.
- The breakfast club provides a safe, healthy and social start to the day. Parents and pupils appreciate this provision. It has helped to improve the attendance and punctuality of pupils who found it difficult to attend school regularly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Training has improved teachers' skills and the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills has improved to good levels.
- The school teaches reading effectively. Improvements to the teaching of phonics (sounds that letters and combinations of letter represent) have helped ensure that pupils develop key reading skills quickly. The most-able readers read complex texts. The school promotes pupils' enjoyment of reading well.
- Teachers work closely and effectively with skilled teaching assistants to make sure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully included in, and benefit from, all classroom activities.
- Teachers regularly provide pupils with stimulating writing tasks. As a result, most pupils are keen to put pen to paper and to record their ideas. However, occasionally not all teachers have the highest expectations of pupils' work. When this is the case, a few pupils take less care presenting their written work, which is at times messy. The school has correctly identified the need to improve handwriting and has recently implemented a new system in Years 1 and 2 to help improve it.
- Teachers are confident to teach mathematics well, especially in enabling pupils to use a range of strategies to solve problems. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils had to order numbers and some chose to use laptop computers while others used number lines. Consequently, pupils are making faster progress than previously.
- Teachers assess and mark pupils' work regularly and help pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. Pupils understand their very clear learning targets.
- Teachers check pupils' learning carefully by asking probing questions that make them think, or by listening in on discussions. Teachers often use pupils' responses to correct errors or to introduce new ideas. This means that almost always work is adapted well to meet pupils' different needs.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved and is now good. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. Improvements to the teaching of phonics have led to an increase in the numbers reaching the expected standard in Year 1. In the 2014 phonics checks, pupils' attainment in Year 1 was above average and much better than their below average attainment in 2013. Consequently, more pupils reach higher levels in reading in the current Year 2.
- In 2014, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were more than three terms behind other pupils in school and two terms behind pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In the current Year 2, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, including many of the pupils from Gypsy or Romany backgrounds, now make more rapid progress, which is similar to their peers in school. As a result, gaps in attainment are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress from their starting points as other pupils. There is some variation in the levels they attain, due to their particular learning needs.
- Higher expectations from staff mean that the most-able pupils make more rapid progress than in past years and achieve well. In 2014, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 or above in reading and writing had increased. Evidence from pupils' work and the school's assessment information indicates that standards continue to rise. The current Year 2 are likely to achieve Level 3 results in line with that seen nationally.
- Most parents think that their children make good progress in the school and achieve well.

The early years provision is outstanding

- At the time of the last inspection children's skills on entry to the Nursery and Reception were broadly typical for their age. The early years leader and the headteacher have established very rigorous new assessment systems which show that now children join the school below what is typical for their age.
- Despite this, the achievement of all groups of children in the early years is outstanding. The early years leader, along with the headteacher, has successfully ensured that early years teaching is consistently of a high quality. This means that most children leaving the Reception Year have a good level of development.
- All groups of children are well nurtured and cared for. The learning journals (collections of children's work with comments by adults) show all children, whatever their starting point, make rapid progress.
- Children in the early years behave extremely well. They are eager to please and have trust and confidence in the adults and other children. They cooperate with each other and sustain their concentration because the activities planned excite them.
- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. The early years leader carefully plans how to improve the school's early years provision. As a result, the school's use of the early years facilities has developed substantially and is of very high quality.
- Nursery and Reception staff work well together to plan learning activities that stimulate the curiosity of the children both inside and outside the classroom. For example, in response to thoughtfully posed adult questions, children developed their numeracy skills effectively through a wide range of interesting practical activities.
- Leaders develop very good relationships with parents and families. They engage parents in their children's learning very well through a range of activities, such as regular coffee morning sessions.
- By the end of the Reception Year, children are confident learners. They acquire a range of skills that prepare them exceptionally well for the move to Year 1.

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	109887
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	462364

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Natalie Irons
Headteacher	Catherine Nisbet
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 May 2013
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