

St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Sandhurst

Lower Church Road, Sandhurst, GU47 8HN

Inspection dates 4–5 June 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 school is well led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. With good support from governors and external advisers, they have successfully improved teaching so that all groups of pupils now achieve well.
- Governors have refined their skills and are now very involved in the school. They accurately know its strengths and what it needs to do to improve further.
- Pupils benefit from a rich and creative variety of subjects. These interest them and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils have supportive and mature relationships with each other, as well as with adults at the school. They enjoy their learning, try hard and behave well.
- Parents are confident that the school keeps their children safe and ensures they make good progress.
- Teachers know the pupils well. They are skilful in planning activities in lessons which engage and challenge all groups of pupils.
- Outstanding provision in the early years means that children progress well, with most now reaching a good level of development.
- Pupils in all year groups are making good progress. The benefits to improvements in teaching, which is now good, are now clearly seen across the school.
- Innovative provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs means they make good progress that helps them catch up with their peers.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders who are new in post have not yet had sufficient time to develop a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching and so do not yet take sufficient responsibility for the achievements of pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 20 lessons.
- Inspectors heard some pupils read and looked at samples of work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan and records of pupils' behaviour, safety and attendance. They also looked at information on individual pupils' progress, anonymised records of teachers' performance and records of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors met with pupils and teachers and spoke to parents. A meeting was held with six members of the governing body, a separate meeting was held with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Oxfordshire.
- Informal discussions were held with parents of pupils at the school on both days of the inspection.
- The views of parents were obtained through the 56 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors considered the written comments from 28 members of staff.

Inspection team

Tim McLoughlin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Una Maria Stevens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below average. This provides additional government funding for children who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is close to the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Some subject leaders are new in post since the previous inspection, as are several teachers including the deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the role of the school's middle leaders so that:
 - they hold a secure and detailed view of teachers' performance which is related closely to pupils' achievement
 - they ensure rates of progress made across all year groups are equally good.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have created an extremely caring ethos within the school. This is reflected in the positive views which the pupils hold about the school and its staff. They have ensured that teachers have high expectations of pupils, consistently so in English and mathematics, and there is a collective understanding that pupils should work hard and do their best work all of the time. Pupils know that good behaviour is required and that they should try hard in their lessons. The success of school leaders in ensuring that teaching quality has improved rapidly shows a strong capacity for further improvement.
- Middle leaders, most of whom are relatively new in post, have a clear sense of purpose in supporting colleagues to improve their teaching. However, they do not yet take a critical view on how the impact of this work translates into raising standards. They do not plan regular opportunities to see at first hand how the quality of teaching is benefiting pupils.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and share a common goal to make teaching the best it can be so that all pupils make good progress. They observe lessons, analyse assessment information and look at pupils' workbooks to check that individuals or groups are not falling behind. The training and development of individual teachers are kept up to date and relate closely to the regular checks on the quality of their work.
- The school is committed to ensuring equal opportunities and has a growing reputation for its inclusive approach. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. Good relations are successfully promoted between the school and the local community, for example with a recent fun run to raise funds for the British Legion on the 70th anniversary of VE Day.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils through a range of activities, for example individual support and small groups to support reading. Funds are also used to support pupils' access to curriculum enrichment. This not only ensures they make good progress but also enhances their well-being.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is carefully spent. Specialist coaches are employed both to lead clubs and to pass on their expertise to school staff. Pupils take advantage of the wider options available. As a result, pupils have more sporting and adventurous opportunities which the whole school can access.
- Pupils benefit from an exciting and creative variety of subjects that support their academic progress and personal development. The school makes very good provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the context of the Christian ethos that the school clearly articulates. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils gain experience of an appropriate range of subjects, including history, computing, science and geography. Work is always well marked and the feedback which pupils receive both recognises achievement and tells them how to make further improvements.
- Pupils gain an understanding of British values through activities such as the work of the school council. As well as forming part of interview panels for new teachers, members of the school council also makes suggestions to governors as to how to develop the school further. Through assemblies, class discussion and the wider curriculum, pupils are taught to be tolerant and respectful and to challenge discrimination, and they leave the school well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school works well with the local authority and the Diocese of Oxfordshire. Together, they have provided a wide range of helpful support, including managing teachers' performance and arranging specialist consultants to work alongside school staff.
- The school takes care to ensure that it has effective arrangements for safeguarding pupils and children in the early years. All statutory requirements are met. For example, meticulous attention is given to checking the suitability of all employees.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a secure grasp of their roles and responsibilities. They are diligent and honest in their interpretation of assessment data. This enables them to check pupils' progress and ask insightful questions. They support the headteacher and deputy headteacher and are now increasingly more adept at offering greater challenge when they need to tackle key areas. Governors have specific responsibilities and visit the school very regularly to gain secure, first-hand information. They keep a close eye on the management of teachers' performance, making sure that teachers are accountable for pupils' progress. Together with the staff, governors communicate their aspirations for the education of the 'whole child' in ensuring the school provides a deep and rich experience. They manage the finances very well and seek assurance that additional funding, for example for disadvantaged pupils and for sports, is well used.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and keen to please. Their prompt responses, mature approach to working in groups and pairs, and ability to work independently enhance their learning and contribute to their progress.
- Good relationships with staff and pupils underpin the positive attitudes seen in nearly all lessons. Pupils show respect for others and are helpful and polite to visitors, staff and their classmates.
- Rewards and sanctions are used consistently and appropriately by all staff. Pupils say the system of rewards, staff encouragement, and the fact that they themselves nominate each other for public recognition helps them to try hard to do their best. Parents are highly positive about their children's behaviour.
- Senior staff have forged close links with external agencies and provide sensitive support for pupils at risk of falling behind. Consequently, all pupils are helped to achieve their full potential and make a good contribution to life at the school.
- Pupils' attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now above that seen nationally.
- Occasionally, pupils' engagement flags when pupils are unsure of what is expected of them in some lessons.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and understand the role of staff and peer mediators who contribute to this.
- Bullying is not considered an issue by the pupils and the school actively promotes positive messages about how to tackle and respond to it. Although some pupils recalled a small number of incidents in the past, they said that it has now been eradicated.
- Pupils are well aware of the need to be cautious when using modern communication technology. They are alert to cyber bullying, for example, and understand the need to keep personal information secure.
- Parents responding to the Parent View online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the way the school ensures their children's safety.
- School leaders have ensured that all members of staff are trained in child protection procedures.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons and show mature attitudes to learning. They sustain concentration for extended periods of time because they become deeply involved with their work and rise to the challenges they are set. For example, in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were writing a biased argument in the context of Toad's trial from *Wind in the Willows*, their behaviour for learning was impeccable as they were engrossed in the atmosphere which the teacher had carefully crafted. As a result, pupils worked very well because the planning had made sure their needs were well catered for.
- Good learning in literacy and numeracy is promoted successfully. Prompted by teachers, pupils try their best, with most making good efforts to present their work neatly, especially in writing where the school has purchased pens of a good quality so that pupils take greater pride in their work.
- Teachers have high expectations of the quality of work they expect from pupils in mathematics and English. This is also evident in the range of other subjects, many of which are woven into topic areas. Pupils in Year 6 were clearly able to evaluate some wonderfully atmospheric storm scenes they had painted in a recent art lesson, where they looked both at the subject and the techniques they had employed.
- Teachers use feedback well and this motivates pupils. Marking of work is very thorough and tells pupils where they have done well and where work could be improved. This also helps the teachers in planning subsequent lessons so that work is not repeated and that it challenges pupils still further.
- Learning is rapid when teachers carefully check on pupils' understanding during lessons and adapt their planning as necessary. Reading is well taught throughout the school. The school has placed a love of reading high on its list of priorities and has created a very well stocked and beautifully presented library area. Some pupils at the school receive additional support with their reading, including weekly reading to a friendly dog!
- Teaching in mathematics and English is good because teachers make the lessons challenging for pupils. For example, literacy skills were used well when pupils were learning about the main features of writing

playscripts following a short video presentation of *Swallows and Amazons*. The work was carefully pitched at different levels of ability and the teacher used himself as a resource to support those most in need of help. As a result, all the pupils achieved success.

- Parents speak very positively about teaching, saying that the teachers know their children very well, and they have nothing but praise for the quality of teaching now at the school.
- Teachers manage their classes well and very little time is wasted. Teachers make good use of various approaches to show pupils how to do their best work, for example by telling them what a good piece of work will look like. Pupils who need extra help are taught well through an effective mix of individual and class support. Adults who work closely with these pupils make an important contribution to their good learning, both alongside teachers in class or in small group support activities.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection because teaching is more effective. Pupils are making good progress and attain above average results in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- Achievement is not yet outstanding, as learning and progress are not yet totally even across all year groups where some pupils are still catching up with their peers.
- Current pupils are making good progress and the standard of their work in Years 2 and 6 is above average. School data indicate that pupils are on course to make better progress than that seen last year at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of the way letters link to the sounds they make (phonics) because this early reading skill is taught well. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in the Year 1 national screening check in 2014 was well above the national average.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 work hard to improve their reading, writing and mathematical skills. The pitch of lessons is high and this means pupils have to work hard and pay close attention to learning.
- The school's innovative approach to homework, using their home learning system, is an enjoyable way of engaging families with the work pupils are doing at school. As well as this, priority is placed upon paired reading throughout the school, so that a regular pattern of homework prepares pupils well for the organisation skills necessary for the next phase of their education.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, particularly in learning to read and in expressing themselves, as a result of the targeted support. This means that the education they receive meets their needs.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to provide extra support for their learning. For example, it is used to fund individual support to increase pupils' self-esteem and provide access to extra-curricular activities. As a result, eligible pupils make the same good progress as their classmates, with no discernible gap in attainment, including when compared with that of other pupils nationally.

The early years provision is outstanding

- When children join the school, in the early years, their skills and knowledge are generally typical for their age. The activities and support provided from the adults help them make a good start to their learning and, as a result, they make very rapid progress.
- Children get off to an excellent start in learning and are well prepared for Year 1 because of the strong relationships they form with the adults working with them. The children are enthusiastic and work well together, clearly enjoying the activities which take place both indoors and outside.
- Children are given many opportunities to learn what outstanding behaviour looks like and how to play with one another cooperatively. This means that they are considerate and behave well, with the teacher setting a calm but authoritative tone for the setting.
- Teaching in the Reception class is outstanding. Staff take into account children's interests. For example, using survival on a desert island as a theme, children were busily constructing waterproof overnight shelters, whilst another group was creating an aqueduct system for re-locating water from one end of the island to their campsite. A focus on learning in the outside environment has been well developed in this class. Through much of this work, children are developing a spirit of scientific enquiry and an understanding of the natural world by engaging actively within it.
- The early years staff have developed close working partnerships with parents. Parents are welcomed into class at the start of each day and are very positive about the transition arrangements for the children.

Parents were unanimous in their praise, with some deliberately moving into the school's catchment area to take advantage of this excellent facility.

- Teachers make superb use of information from assessments. This is compiled into 'A Duckling's Story' book which is given to parents at the end of the Reception year, as both an informative summary of progress made over the year and a much-valued keepsake.
- The indoor classroom is spacious, well organised and well resourced. This room is complemented by an easily accessible outside space which is always popular throughout the year.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision is outstanding and have led to consistently high rates of progress and children's achievement. Staff successfully ensure that children learn in a very safe way in a variety of learning environments.

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	109973
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	462455

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christopher Harris
Headteacher	Maire McGrory
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 July 2013
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