

Blewbury Endowed Church of England Primary School

Westbrook Street, Didcot, OX11 9QB

Inspection dates

3–4 June 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

- School leaders and governors sustain a strong sense of purpose in this improving school. They ensure that good teaching enables all groups of pupils to achieve well.
- Children make a good start in the early years and continue to make good progress through the school.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour underpin their learning and progress.
- Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for.
- The innovative curriculum engages pupils. They say teachers make learning fun and they are very enthusiastic about the broad range of educational visits that support their learning.
- Extensive links with schools in other countries enhance pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- An emphasis on rights, responsibilities and respect contributes much to pupils' moral and social development, and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school works closely and effectively with other local schools. Pupils thrive socially as a result of their participation in the activities provided by these links. Staff also benefit from the sharing of expertise within the partnership.
- Governors work very effectively with school leaders to help sustain a successful learning community. They hold the leaders robustly to account for the school's performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching is not yet outstanding because there are inconsistencies in the emphasis given to spelling, punctuation, handwriting and grammar when teachers are marking pupils' work.
- Although pupils' basic numeracy skills are secure, some lack confidence in using them when tackling problems.
- Some parents are unclear about the school's approach to behaviour management, including bullying, and homework.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in nine lessons and parts of lessons, and looked at a range of pupils' work. He also listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 read.
- During the inspection, the headteacher, the early years leader, another member of the leadership team and other members of staff were accompanying pupils on residential visits. All pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 were away on these visits.
- Meetings took place with the two remaining members of the leadership team, staff and groups of pupils. Telephone discussions were held with the headteacher, the mathematics leader, the early years coordinator and a representative from the local authority. The inspector also met the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress, and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- He observed movement around the school at playtime and at lunch breaks and attended an assembly. Displays around school and also in classrooms were scrutinised.
- The inspector took into account the 78 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as the results of the most recent questionnaire carried out by the school. He spoke informally with a number of parents.
- The 17 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.

Inspection team

Rob Crompton, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is below average in size.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with around 10% from a range of minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Both these proportions are below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children who are in the care of the local authority or those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is around half the national average. These needs relate mainly to learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- Children in the early years attend full-time in a Reception class.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and accelerate achievement by ensuring more consistency in:
 - feedback to pupils on how to improve their skills in spelling, punctuation and handwriting
 - teaching pupils how to apply these skills routinely in their written work
 - developing pupils' confidence in using their basic numeracy when tackling mathematical problems.
- Develop further links with parents in order to clarify their understanding of the school's approach to managing behaviour, including its response to bullying, and homework.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leadership team has a clear vision for improvement and high achievement. Their ambition, expressed in the school's motto as 'Inspiring minds through outstanding opportunities', is shared by staff. All leaders encourage good standards of behaviour throughout the school.
- The school has successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. This has led to significant improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics.
- Senior and subject leaders, including in the early years, keep a close eye on the quality of teaching. Arrangements for checking teachers' performance are well established. Staff are set challenging targets. They have good opportunities to extend their expertise through training, although school leaders are aware that some inconsistencies remain.
- Pupils' progress is closely tracked, allowing staff to provide good support for pupils in all year groups. Senior leaders use the information they collect about pupils' progress to good effect in meetings with staff, to identify any individuals who are at the risk of falling behind the progress expected of them.
- The curriculum offers rich and imaginative activities that widen pupils' experience and understanding of their community and the wider world. The school takes full advantage of funding from the British Council to establish links with other countries, including Finland, Spain, Germany, Turkey and the Czech Republic. The school has been recognised as an 'International School' for the past 15 years.
- As a result of links with other schools, pupils learn about key values and concepts that are fundamental to the British way of life, such as democracy and justice, and learn to understand and be tolerant of people whose culture is different to their own. In this way, the school ensures there is no discrimination and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils participate actively in many community events, including sporting and music activities. They benefit from a wide range of field trips, including residential visits. All these promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.
- The primary sports funding has been used effectively to train staff and to engage more pupils in competitive sports. Many pupils participate in and enjoy regular competitions with other local schools.
- Pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and develop well, whatever their background or ability. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. They are supported, for example, by additional tuition and subsidised educational visits. As a result, these pupils make good progress.
- The school gives high priority to pupils' safety and well-being. Safeguarding arrangements, such as vetting of new staff and assessing risks before field trips, are effectively implemented.
- The local authority provides light-touch support, as it is confident in the school's capacity to improve. There is a mutually beneficial partnership with ten local schools. For example, this has enabled the joint appointment of two home-school workers and the sharing of expertise. Several local schools have adopted the school's assessment system.
- All parents responding to the online questionnaire (Parent View) indicated that their children are happy at the school, and the overwhelming majority felt they are well cared for. Parents spoken to during the inspections had generally very positive views. A minority of parents did not agree about the management of behaviour, the school's response to bullying and arrangements for homework. These concerns were followed up thoroughly during the inspection. A new and effective procedure for managing behaviour has been introduced and includes clear guidance on bullying.
- School leaders acknowledge that, despite detailed information on the school website and meetings for parents, there is a need to provide further opportunities to explain to parents the rationale for and approach to behaviour management, including the response to bullying, and to homework.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a wide range of expertise. They are adept at using assessment information to compare the school's performance with national data. Governors ask insightful questions in order to hold leaders to account. They each have an area of responsibility, related to the school development plan, and visit during the school day to check on how initiatives are proceeding. They seek assurance that additional funds, including those for disadvantaged pupils and for international links, are used effectively. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. They seek assurance that the teachers' pay policy is followed and that any underperformance is tackled. They ensure that statutory regulations for safeguarding are fully met.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes. Attendance is above average. Asked about how children from different backgrounds get on, one said, 'It's like a jigsaw; we all fit together.' Another commented, 'We just make newcomers fit in and be comfortable.'
- Pupils are responding very well to the recently revised approach to managing behaviour. It is closely aligned to the school's promotion of the '5Rs' (resilience, responsibility, reasoning, resourcefulness and reflection). Year 3 pupils talked maturely about how each class makes up its own behaviour charter and how everyone signs it.
- The few pupils who find it difficult to behave well are supported very effectively. This means that the learning of other pupils is rarely disrupted.
- During lessons and assemblies, pupils' behaviour is typically good. Occasionally, when moving around the school pupils rush along corridors, in their enthusiasm, for example, to get to the hall for physical education.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Staff implement the school's safeguarding policies effectively, for example, by ensuring the highest standards of safety when pupils are transported on the two school minibuses.
- The school carries out checks on all staff to make sure that they are suitable to work with children. Staff help pupils to develop their understanding of how to stay safe and to enable them to make safe choices. Year 3 pupils, for example, were quite clear that they should not reveal any personal information when using modern technology. One, remarked, 'They may say they're your friend when they're not.'
- Pupils say they feel very safe and have an adult to turn to if necessary. One pupil said, 'Because it's a small school, everybody knows everybody, so we can talk to any adult.'
- Pupils know the difference between occasional naughty behaviour and bullying. Year 3 pupils, for instance, were clear that verbal bullying can be just as hurtful as physical bullying. They were equally adamant that bullying is very rare and, should it occur, adults would soon put a stop to it.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Pupils enjoy lessons and told the inspector that 'teachers make learning fun'. They are keen to contribute and share their ideas. The teaching assistants are highly committed to their roles and work closely with teachers to provide skilled support that moves learning on for all groups of pupils.
- Classrooms are welcoming and organised well. Pupils benefit from prompts displayed around classrooms, for example, vocabulary lists supporting current topics and reminders of mathematical terms, such as 'subtract', 'take away' and 'difference'.
- The systematic approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) from the Reception class upwards provides pupils with a solid foundation for reading and writing. As they come across unfamiliar words, pupils make good use of their phonic skills. For example, when reading to the inspector, a Year 1 pupil sounded out 'fr-is-bee'.
- Pupils read to adults frequently, particularly those who are less confident. In addition to the effective contributions of teaching assistants, parents and other members of the local community provide valuable one-to-one support for pupils.
- Good teaching ensures pupils progress well in writing. Pupils rise to the challenges that teachers provide across a wide range of writing styles, including persuasive writing and factual accounts. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are given due emphasis during lessons, although there are inconsistencies in how teachers respond to inaccuracies when marking pupils' work.
- Much progress has been made in improving the teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection. During a brief 'on the boil' session at the beginning of every day, pupils practise number facts. Teachers routinely set challenging tasks; for example, Year 2 pupils quickly moved from exploring fractions using sections of apples to find $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ of numbers.
- Effective assessment strategies enable staff to keep track of pupils' progress and identify where more demanding work is required or where extra support is needed.
- In the light of a few parents' comments about homework, the inspector looked at samples of homework

set over the last year. Pupils have been set a good range of tasks, including revision of phonics, spellings and number facts. There were also poems to learn and work related to the current topic work, such as the names and relative positions of planets. Year 6 records included useful dialogue between the teacher and parents, including comments from parents about the level of support their children had needed and the efforts they had made.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The rate of pupils' progress has accelerated in both English and mathematics, reflecting improvements in the quality of teaching and the more challenging curriculum. The attainment of pupils currently on roll is broadly in line with national expectations, and many pupils are working above this.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 screening check to assess understanding and use of phonics improved significantly from half the national average in 2013 to above average in 2014, with similar results this year.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress from their different starting points. By the end of Year 2 in 2014, standards were generally similar to other schools nationally. Currently, Year 2 pupils are working above the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion reaching the higher levels in reading and writing is above last year's national averages, particularly in writing.
- In 2014, the proportion of Year 6 pupils who had made the expected progress since Year 2 was below the national average. Progress is now much improved through Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics. However, although pupils' basic numeracy skills are more secure, some lack confidence in using them when tackling problems.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved, particularly regarding the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels, which have risen considerably; for example, from 6% to 40% in spelling, punctuation and grammar. In all year groups, pupils are making good progress. The evidence from lessons and pupils' exercise books indicates that more pupils are reaching the expected levels and more are working at a higher level in English and mathematics. This is reflected in the school's predictions for 2015.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with similar pupils nationally. These pupils make good progress as a result of well-targeted intervention and high-quality support from the teaching assistants that ensure their needs are met
- In 2014, most disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium in Year 6 made the expected progress in English and mathematics. Although the number of pupils is too small to identify any trends, the school's tracking data show that in every year group, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress.
- Their attainment closely matched that of disadvantaged pupils in other schools, although there was a gap equivalent to around half a year between their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, and that of the other pupils in the school.
- In 2014, at the end of Key Stage 2, the few most able pupils made expected progress in all subjects. However, the proportion of all pupils reaching the higher levels was below the national average. The evidence seen during the inspection, however, shows that the most able pupils achieve well. The proportion reaching the higher levels has approximately doubled in all subjects and is a little higher than the national averages in 2014.

The early years provision

is good

- As children enter the Reception class, their attainment varies from year to year, although their personal and social development, and their early literacy and numeracy skills, tend to be lower than is typical for their age. They make good progress through the early years. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception this year is set to be well above recent national averages. This means that children are well prepared for work in Year 1.
- Staff work successfully with parents to ensure children soon settle in to school routines and learn to behave well when working as a class and when learning more informally alongside their classmates. They are nurtured by the teaching staff and feel safe in the company of their friends.
- Children enjoy and learn from good teaching and a range of purposeful activities both indoors and outside. As they were playing in the classroom shop, one greeted the inspector: 'What would you like to buy... that's 10p please.' At the same time, children were engaged in many activities relating to Noah and the Ark, for example, sorting toy animals into twos, making patterns of two on a peg board, or chalking

even numbers outside. During such activities adults support children's learning effectively, drawing on what they already know and extending their understanding and skills. This contributes to the good progress children make, including the development of their language, communication and number skills.

- The early years is managed effectively. Children's progress is closely tracked. Daily practice of early phonics skills and counting helps them to gain confidence in core areas. The early years leader has identified the need to develop further links with pre-school settings to help gain a clearer understanding of children's starting points. Learning in the outdoor areas is generally managed well, although there are sometimes too few opportunities for children to use and extend their language and number skills.

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	123167
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	456213

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	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Marsden
Headteacher	Marion Mills
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 March 2012
Telephone number	01235 850411
Fax number	01235 850411
Email address	head.3248@blewbury.oxon.sch.uk

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