

Robert Sandilands Primary School and Nursery

Digby Road, Speen, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 1TS

Inspection dates	18–19 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders and governors have successfully tackled the issues identified in the last inspection. They have improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment resulting in good outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils' outcomes are good. From starting points which are below those typical for their age, pupils, including those in the early years, make good progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability achieve well. Those who speak English as an additional language achieve well as the school caters for their needs with care.
- Disadvantaged pupils are supported skilfully. As a result, they make good progress.
- Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors know the school well and provide constructive challenge.
- Pupils behave well. They enjoy attending school. Pupils take on responsibility enthusiastically.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through a well-planned range of subjects. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is thorough and effective. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure pupils' welfare needs are met.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 has not been as rapid as other subjects, because pupils do not develop the skills that enable them to deepen and apply their understanding of mathematical ideas.
- Teachers do not always sufficiently promote pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills, including those in the early years and the most-able pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment in order to ensure that more pupils make better than expected progress, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - developing pupils' skills in mathematics to deepen and apply their understanding and mastery of mathematical concepts
 - promoting pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills more effectively, including those in the early years
 - challenging the most-able pupils by ensuring they consistently tackle more demanding activities.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, his senior team and the governing body have been effective in remedying weaknesses identified at the school's last inspection and uniting the staff to support their drive for improvement.
- Staff are very committed to improving pupils' achievement. A typical comment from staff was: 'We all work as a team and support each other.'
- The school's self-evaluation shows that leaders accurately identify the areas requiring development. They review how successfully their strategies have increased pupils' progress and they make further changes where necessary. For example, leaders know that there is more to be done to ensure more pupils make better than expected progress in mathematics.
- Routines to check pupils' progress now rigorously hold all teachers and support staff to account. Senior leaders' judgements about key aspects of the school are accurate. Well-chosen training enables staff to improve their teaching and pupils' learning.
- The school monitors the use of pupil premium funding carefully and shows that, overall, the funding is having a positive impact on pupils' rates of progress. For example, in 2015, the funding was used to provide additional teaching support for disadvantaged pupils and these pupils outperformed their classmates in all subjects.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its strong and caring ethos. Adults are positive examples as they show empathy, respect and kindness. As a result, pupils are considerate and thoughtful. They have extremely positive relationships with adults and one another.
- The school promotes pupils' understanding of fundamental British values effectively. Leaders foster the principles of democracy, for example through elections to select members of the school council. The school's eight key values such as enthusiasm and perseverance encourage pupils to understand and display these qualities in and around the school. The school strongly makes sure all pupils are valued and that they have equal chances to take part in activities.
- The school uses additional primary sports funding effectively. There is a wide range of clubs and staff sport training. The school provides activities that include running, archery and rounders. Many pupils attend and this helps promote healthy lifestyles for all.
- Parents express support for the school, its leaders and its work. The majority of parents would recommend the school to other parents. One parent's view summed up the views of many others by saying: 'I am very happy with this school and think the teachers are doing an excellent job.'
- The school has an effective relationship with the local authority and support has been particularly useful in helping to improve the quality of governance and checking the accuracy of leaders' judgements.
- Leaders have a secure knowledge of the new national curriculum requirements. Subjects are well planned and enriched by many trips and visitors. It is further enhanced by music, sport, outdoor learning and visits, for example to Hampton Court and the Isle of Wight. Pupils regularly practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills. These opportunities have improved pupils' progress generally, although progress in mathematics has not been as strong.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the previous inspection, governors have taken steps to ensure that they are better organised and equipped to check on the school's work effectively. They know how well the school is doing in comparison to national standards. They assess the quality of teaching from detailed and accurate reports. They check that these are accurate through the questions they ask and the regular visits to the school. Governors have established clear links between teachers' performance and pay decisions. They are ambitious for the school's future success and have played an active role in driving improvements within the school.
 - Governors carefully monitor the use of additional funding, both the pupil premium and sports grant, to make sure that they improve outcomes for pupils. They are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that there are no barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Rigorous systems are in place in all areas of safeguarding and all staff understand them. The school sensitively handles relationships with parents and families that may need extra support and advice. There are very effective relationships with other

agencies to ensure pupils are safe and that their welfare needs are met. Regular training for staff is relevant and is up to date. Parents agree that the school keeps pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching, pupils' learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Visits to lessons and work in pupils' books show that, over time, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills has improved to good levels.
- Staff form an effective team. Strong, positive relationships ensure that advice helps to develop their teaching. Staff share ideas and expertise to help inform further improvement.
- The school teaches reading effectively. Improvements to the teaching of phonics (sounds that letters and combinations of letters make) help ensure that pupils develop key reading skills quickly. The school promotes pupils' enjoyment of reading well.
- Teachers develop pupils' writing skills effectively. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, when pupils wrote a description about a creepy setting, teaching was effective because the teacher provided them with structured ways of developing their vocabulary and styles of writing.
- The effective teaching of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability has accelerated their progress and closed the gaps in progress with that of other pupils.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and provide guidance that helps pupils to know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work further. Pupils' work shows pupils respond to this advice and pupils say that the advice helps them to make progress.
- Teaching assistants provide very effective support to pupils' learning, particularly for pupils who have special educational needs or disability and those at the early stages of learning English. For example, individuals and groups of pupils receive support that focuses carefully on their specific needs. In addition, for those at an early stage of learning English, there are opportunities to enhance their learning, for example by using pictures and symbols to help them understand more quickly.
- Teaching prepares pupils well for their next school and life beyond. They develop into enquiring and interesting learners.
- The quality of teaching mathematics has improved and pupils now make more progress. However, although pupils are able to apply their skills more effectively, they do not always have enough opportunities to deepen their understanding and mastery of mathematical ideas and concepts.
- Teaching, particularly for the most able, does not sufficiently develop pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills. As a result, pupils do not make more than expected progress in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The pupils are friendly and confident towards visitors, welcoming them warmly and being courteous. Pupils are clearly proud of their school and like to share their experiences with other people.
- Pupils are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe, including about road safety, fire safety and safety when using the internet.
- Inspectors viewed a wide range of evidence which shows that bullying and racist incidents are rare. Pupils who spoke with inspectors confirmed this was the case.
- Pastoral support for families and vulnerable families is very strong. Staff work effectively with external agencies to support children and their families.
Pupils have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying. They know that name-calling, inappropriate language or any form of discrimination is not acceptable. They told inspectors that on the few occasions bullying occurs, staff deal with it quickly. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the school's care for pupils. Most are confident that this is done well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- The school manages pupils' behaviour well. Pupils understand the consequences of poor behaviour and why it is important to behave well. Pupils who spoke to inspectors have a good understanding of right and wrong. They also said that behaviour was typically good in the school.
- Pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities. For example, the 'Hall Helpers' encourage pupils to keep the dining hall tidy and eat all of their food. This helps to promote respect and equality within their community.
- Attendance levels are above the national average. Pupils enjoy going to school, with pupils saying the school is 'amazing, incredible and fascinating'. The school has good procedures in place to check attendance to challenge and reduce persistent absence.
- The breakfast club provides a good, nurturing start to the day for those who attend.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and teachers use these positive attitudes to help drive progress within their learning. On very rare occasions where the teacher has not pitched the learning at the right level, a few pupils lose concentration and become distracted, which gets in the way of their learning.
- The majority of parents, staff and pupils talk positively about pupils' behaviour in the school. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, felt that pupils behave well.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils through the school have improved to good levels since the last inspection.
- Children join the Reception Year with skills below those typical for their age. A good level of teaching ensures that they make good progress in the early years; by the end of the Reception Year, the percentage of children who achieve a good level of development is similar to the national average.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. Improvements in the teaching of phonics have led to improvement. In the 2015 phonics checks, pupils' attainment in Year 1 was in line with the national average. Current pupils have benefited from further improvements this year and more pupils are on track to achieve the higher levels in reading at the end of Year 2.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level for mathematics, reading and writing was in line with the national average. In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in writing and mathematics was above national average. Current pupils' work indicates that the most-able pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2015, the proportions who achieved the expected level in writing, reading and mathematics was in line with national average figures. In 2015, the proportions of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in reading and writing were also similar to most other schools. Not enough of the pupils throughout the school make more than expected progress in mathematics. However, the school recognises that this is an area for improvement and is conducting monitoring and assessment of these pupils.
- The performance of disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2015 national tests indicated that they were half a term ahead of other pupils nationally. The results also showed that they were just under two and a half terms ahead of other pupils in the school. This shows the school's success in narrowing significantly the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in the school and nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability benefit from good teaching and achieve well. Those who speak English as an additional language, particularly those at an early stage of English, also achieve well. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to make sure that these pupils benefit from all the activities provided for them, which are specifically adapted to their needs when appropriate.
- The progress pupils make mean that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Year 6 pupils are regularly reminded that the work they are doing will help them when they move on to secondary school.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well led and managed. The setting provides a stimulating environment where children thrive and learn. Adults plan and provide a wide range of exciting indoor and outdoor learning activities.

- Teachers generally plan learning that interests children and promotes their basic skills well. The staff closely check children's skills and understanding when they start. Children were observed asking good questions in the 'messy kitchen' and the well-resourced outdoor area. They develop their writing and mathematics skills well. For example, a group of children were writing sentences about the photos they had taken when looking for shapes outside. This shows that they are well prepared for their next stage in their education in Year 1.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability is effective. This ensures that they achieve in line with their peers.
- Children behave well and know how to stay safe. Children are polite to adults and work well together. Staff have created a caring and positive environment where children feel secure and able to engage in their learning.
- Staff assess children's progress regularly and the learning journals and 'special books' show evidence of good progress made by children of all abilities.
- Parents told inspectors that communication between home and school is good. Parents said their children are happy, safe and 'love coming to school'.
- The provision is a safe place to learn because the safety and well-being of every child is at the forefront of everything the school does.
- Children achieve well in the Nursery and in the two Reception classes. Children make good progress, given what they know when they start, and achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. While children make good progress, outcomes are not outstanding because not enough children achieve beyond a good level of development, particularly those who are capable of harder work.
- Teaching generally takes account of the needs of the children, although there are occasions when there is not enough challenge for the most able. Children's learning is not always moved on when the most able have grasped an idea and are ready for the next stage in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	109861
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10012236

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Murdoch
Headteacher	Richard Blofeld
Telephone number	01635 40318
Website	www.robertsandilands.westberks.dbprimary.com
Email address	office@sandilands.w-berks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 February 2014

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school with nine classes. The early years consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes. The Nursery runs in the mornings only.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below average and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is low. However, the proportion with education, health and care plans or statements of special needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding given to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- There have been changes in leadership since the last inspection, with the appointment of a new chair of the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 29 lessons; all of these were joint observations with the headteacher and two deputy headteachers.
- The inspectors 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 books.
- Meetings were held with school staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers.
- Discussions took place with several groups of pupils, as well as informal conversations with other pupils during lessons and at breaktimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoy.
- Inspectors took into consideration eight responses to the online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of 69 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 53 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Harris, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Robert Howell

Ofsted Inspector

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