

Thatcham Park Church of England Primary School

Park Avenue, Thatcham, Berkshire RG18 4NP

Inspection dates	15–16 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently strong enough. It does not always enable enough pupils to make rapid progress. Pupils’ achievement has improved since the previous inspection, but it is not yet good.
- Pupils do not always have a clear understanding of their next steps in learning. They are sometimes unsure what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers’ assessments of pupils’ learning are not always identifying accurately what pupils have achieved.
- Teachers do not always ensure that the most-able pupils are given work that is sufficiently challenging.
- School improvement planning is not sharply focused on improving outcomes for pupils. It does not identify how the impact of actions will be measured or provide information on the expected improvements in pupils’ achievement over time.
- School leaders are not measuring the impact of improvement activities well enough to know whether they have been successful.
- Assessment procedures are not yet fully effective. Leaders have not ensured that all teachers understand and consistently apply measures to determine pupils’ achievements.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have successfully increased the skills of middle leaders. Their capacity to support improvements in their areas of responsibility have improved.
- Pupils behave well. They have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school. They are polite, well mannered and courteous.
- School leaders promote pupils’ personal development effectively. Pupils are cared for well. They are provided with effective encouragement and support.
- Children in the early years have a good start to their education because the early years leader has ensured that provision is strong. Children make good progress in their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and increase rates of pupils' progress by:
 - increasing the consistency in the quality of teaching so that all teaching helps pupils to make rapid progress
 - making sure that all pupils have a good understanding of their next steps in learning and understand how to achieve them
 - ensuring that teachers accurately identify pupils' achievements
 - increasing the challenge for the most able pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that strategic planning is sharply focused on key actions which are more closely linked to their intended impact on pupils' learning, with clear milestones linked to pupils' achievement
 - measuring the impact of actions to know what are the most effective
 - embedding and evaluating assessment procedures so that they are clearly understood and accurate.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Senior leaders do not measure the impact of their actions well enough. This is because the school improvement plan and action plans are not sharply focused on setting out the difference their actions are expected to have on improving outcomes for pupils.
- A number of changes have been made to bring about improvements since the previous inspection. But school leaders do not always know how successful they are because they do not measure the impact they have had on pupils' achievement.
- School leaders have adopted a new assessment system. They keep detailed records of pupils' achievements. However, not all teachers are completely sure how to apply the new system.
- Leaders plan additional interventions for pupils who need extra help, but because these interventions are not analysed and evaluated effectively, their impact on pupils' learning and progress is unclear. This means that leaders cannot be assured that methods are successful.
- Senior leaders have successfully increased the skills and the capacity of middle leaders. They now take on a much more active role in leading improvements in their areas of responsibility. The English and mathematics leaders have implemented effective systems to check on teachers' planning, provide coaching and support for teachers, and check on the progress of pupils across the school. They have sharpened the focus on checking on pupils' learning over time and introduced 'cold and hot' tasks for pupils to complete at the beginning and end of units of work. This enables them to check more carefully what pupils have learned.
- Although teaching is not yet good, it has improved. Weaknesses in teaching have been identified by school leaders. Coaching and support have been provided which has had a positive impact. As a result, good progress is evident in some classes across the school.
- The curriculum leader has ensured that the broad and balanced curriculum is interesting and stimulating for pupils. It has been devised to map the development of pupils' skills over time and provides useful links between different subjects to inspire pupils. Enrichment opportunities provide memorable experiences for pupils such as the residential trip for Year 6 pupils to Osmington Bay and the Year 1 trip to the Thatcham Discovery Centre. Pupils enjoy regularly taking part in extra-curricular activities such as French club, art club and dance and drama club.
- The school values of 'community, compassion, respect, wisdom, thankfulness and endurance' support pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. During an assembly observed during the inspection, pupils sang with energy and enthusiasm in two-part harmony which resulted in a moment of awe and wonder. Themed weeks such as British Heritage Week help pupils to understand about British values. This now needs embedding.
- The school uses the sports premium funding effectively to promote pupils' physical development. Sports coaches are used to provide specific exercises to develop pupils' skills and also to train teachers. Some parents would like pupils to be more involved in sporting competitions with other schools in the community.
- Effective use of pupil premium funding is beginning to have a positive impact on closing the achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. This is improving the equality of opportunity for these pupils.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school well and provide challenge through their meetings by raising questions and requesting information. Governors regularly visit the school to meet with the headteacher and other leaders.
 - Governors have not challenged pupils' performance information robustly enough because the school's plans do not include sufficient information about the expected outcomes for all groups of pupils.
 - Governors have a good understanding about the link between teachers' performance and pay. They provide challenge when necessary to ensure that their decisions about pay progression are accurate.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Recruitment and induction procedures ensure that staff are well informed about their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Those responsible for leading safeguarding have been trained at the appropriate level and all staff and governors have received training to help them to know how to prevent pupils from being exposed to extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Teaching is not yet consistently good throughout the school. As a result, not all pupils make good progress from their starting points. In some lessons pupils make strong progress, but this is not always the case. In some classes, teachers do not plan tasks and activities which focus on the intended learning that is expected to take place. Instead they focus on tasks to be completed. Consequently, in these lessons, pupils are not sure what they are learning.
- In some lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve. Sometimes work that has been completed in previous lessons is repeated. This means that these pupils are not challenged sufficiently well. This slows their progress. As a result, they do not make the rapid progress they are capable of making.
- Teachers are grappling with the new assessment system which is designed to show what pupils have achieved. Currently there are some inconsistencies in the application of the assessments. At times, some teachers are not planning learning which is linked well enough to pupils' next steps.
- Pupils' books across the school show that teachers are beginning to use the school's agreed marking policy more consistently to provide guidance to pupils to help them to know what they need to do to improve their work. Although pupils are provided with time to read and respond to teachers' comments, their responses do not always result in improvements. This means that pupils' progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- The support provided for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability is helping them to make better progress. The gaps in learning between these groups of pupils and other pupils is beginning to reduce.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. Where teaching is stronger, teachers convey their subject knowledge well to extend pupils' learning and deepen their thinking. This was evident in one Year 4 class where the most able pupils were challenged to include personification and metaphors in their writing. Pupils rose to this challenge and made good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders have created a positive, supportive culture where pupils feel safe. The safety of pupils is a high priority. There is a strong focus on pupils' welfare and their physical and emotional well-being. Clear systems are in place to enable pupils to alert adults to any concern they have. Swift action is taken by the inclusion leader and family support worker. Additional support from other outside agencies is put in place when necessary to support pupils and their families.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They know that there is always an adult they can turn to if they have a problem. They know that any issues will be dealt with swiftly.
- School leaders have placed a strong emphasis on helping pupils to be successful learners. The set of characters used to describe 'learning powers', such as Betty Bee who characterises being cooperative and Colin the Caterpillar who concentrates, help pupils to understand the skills required to be effective learners. Teachers regularly refer to these learning skills which help pupils' learning in lessons.
- Pupils learn about morals and ethics because the school's values are shared during assemblies and in personal, social, health and economic education lessons. Pupils were clear about the meaning of wisdom, one of the school's values, which was the theme at a recent assembly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During lessons and when moving around the school, they are attentive and respectful of one another and of the adults working with them. The start of the school day is calm and productive. Pupils settle quickly into the early morning activities, which they enjoy. During breaktimes, pupils respond well to each other, playing together and sharing the wide range of equipment available sensibly.
- The majority of parents agree that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved. Inspectors found that pupils regulate their own behaviour well and adults rarely need to intervene.

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school which is evident from their very good attendance. Pupils work well together in pairs and small groups, confidently sharing their ideas and discussing their learning.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to assess one another's work. They act responsibly and sensitively, supporting each other by checking answers and sharing solutions together.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' progress from different starting points is not consistently strong in all classes and across all subjects. Therefore outcomes require improvement. However, there are signs that progress is improving and gaps are beginning to close.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been inconsistent because the quality of teaching has been variable over time. Too few pupils are making more than expected progress.
- Analysis of pupils' work in books shows a mixed picture. In some classes the most able pupils are making better progress. But this is not the case in all classes. Likewise disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability make better progress in some classes than others. This is very much linked to the evidence gathered during lesson observations.
- Assessment information, provided by the school, shows that older pupils, although making better progress than previously, are not making enough progress to be well prepared for the next stage in their education. Only a small minority of pupils are exceeding the progress expected.
- Outcomes in phonics (the sounds letters make) in 2015 did not improve from 2014 and the gap between all pupils at the school widened compared with the national average. The school estimates that a higher proportion of pupils in Year 1 will reach the expected standard in the phonics screening tests in 2016. This is because they have introduced a more systematic way of teaching early reading skills.
- Pupils enjoy reading and are enthusiastic about the books they choose to read. They use their phonics knowledge effectively to tackle new and unfamiliar words well.
- Year 6 pupils' progress has accelerated this year because they have been taught well. Their progress in reading is much stronger than in writing and mathematics. They have made good progress overall. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability is similar to all other pupils in the year. However, because their progress previously was not good enough, only half the pupils are expected to reach the expected standard in mathematics, just over half in reading and less than half in writing.
- Younger pupils are in a better position to reach the expected standard for their age according to the school's own information. This is because teaching is improving. Gaps in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability are narrowing.

Early years provision

is good

- Outcomes for children, including disadvantaged children, in the early years are good. They make good progress from their starting points. Many children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are below and, in some cases, well below those that are typical for their age. Effective use is made of additional funding to ensure that all children make similar progress. Most children are well prepared for learning when they start in Year 1.
- Children show good levels of concentration and perseverance during activities they initiate themselves. In one class, children were able to recall the names of 3D shapes as they were constructing cuboids, cubes and square-based pyramids using small sticks.
- The early years leader has made a number of improvements to the provision in the Nursery and Reception classes this year: for example, identifying gaps in children's learning and development more quickly to plan learning opportunities both outdoors and inside to boost children's learning and address the gaps. She has a clear vision for improving early years provision further to enable children to make even better progress.
- Children enjoy coming to school and settle quickly. They know the routines well. Adults make expectations for behaviour clear to children and this helps them to feel safe. Just like the older children in key stages 1 and 2, the youngest children learn about the skills they need to develop to learn well. They are learning to 'have a go' and not be afraid of making mistakes, just like Ollie Owl.

- The early years leader ensures that parents are included in the assessments of their child's learning. This begins before they start school through home visits to discuss each individual child. Good relationships are developed which ensures that information is shared effectively. Parents are given opportunities to 'stay and play' with their child and to learn about how they can support their child's early reading skills.
- The early years leader has made sure that children's learning is centred on their interests. The outdoor provision is well resourced. Children have the opportunity to learn and develop their skills across all areas of learning. They particularly enjoy 'Welly Wednesdays' where they are provided with a range of activities linked to their interests outside. During the inspection they were building dens for animals out of twigs, branches and leaves. This motivated and engaged children well. They thoroughly enjoyed this outdoor learning experience.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding and welfare are met.

School details

Unique reference number	135080
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	10012315

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	431
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Laidler
Headteacher	Alison Webster
Telephone number	01635 870950
Website	http://thatchampark.w-berks.sch.uk/westberks/primary/thatchampark
Email address	office@thatchampark.w-berks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2014

Information about this school

- Thatcham Park is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children who are looked after by the local authority and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There is no alternative provision.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about reading and phonics in key stage 1, the special educational needs policy or curriculum information for early years on its website.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was conducted under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
- Inspectors observed learning in a number of lessons on both days of the inspection. Two observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, the local authority, the diocesan adviser, senior and middle leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils talk about their work and heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils during lunchtimes and playtimes. Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents including pupils' work in books, achievement and progress information, documents relating to safeguarding, and school policies and procedures.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school improvement plan and external reports on the school.
- The inspection team also considered the 45 responses to the Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, two responses from staff gathered through the staff survey and 50 responses from pupils in the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Ann Henderson, lead inspector

Mo Galway

Claire Haines

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

