

Stephen Freeman Community Primary School

Freeman Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7BZ

Inspection dates

30 April – 1 May 2019

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 have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Consequently, pupils are now making better progress in many areas of the curriculum.
- Leaders have revised the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. These new approaches are proving effective in extending pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Consequently, pupils' progress in English and mathematics is now good after the decline in progress and attainment in 2018.
- Children achieve well in Reception and Nursery. Through well-structured activities, children develop strong communication skills alongside knowledge about the world they inhabit.
- Pupils enjoy learning and are intellectually curious about the subjects they study. Most pupils are attentive, conscientious and diligent.
- The school's work to promote the development of pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are well cared for and are supportive of the needs of their peers.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently make good progress in many areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support to enable them to make good progress.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in 21st century Britain. Pupils learn about the importance of democracy, tolerance and free speech.
- The curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to develop their knowledge of a range of subjects such as physical education (PE), music, art and science.
- Governors challenge school leaders effectively. Following a period of turbulence, governors share the ambition of school leaders for the academic and social success of all pupils.
- Leaders and staff do not use the school's wealth of information about pupils to plan for all pupils to make advanced progress in English and mathematics.
- Although leaders have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge about vocabulary and grammar, teachers do not help pupils to develop their language skills effectively in all areas of the curriculum.
- Although most pupils display exemplary attitudes towards learning, a few pupils' low-level disruptive behaviour is not addressed consistently well. As a result, these pupils do not achieve as well as other pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers make full use of information about pupils' prior learning when planning sequences of lessons in English and mathematics so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make rapid progress
 - consolidating and extending pupils' understanding, skills and knowledge in English and mathematics so that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attain at least in line with other pupils nationally
 - ensuring a systematic approach to the teaching of vocabulary and grammar.
- Ensure that the school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently so that the few pupils who misbehave develop effective strategies to regulate their behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has taken swift and decisive action to address the inconsistencies in teaching and learning that led to a decline in results in 2018. She is supported well by the leadership team, staff and governors.
- Staff are unanimous in feeling well supported by school leaders. Senior leaders make effective use of training opportunities to strengthen the quality of provision at the school. Consequently, teaching and learning has improved and is now good. Gaps in pupils' conceptual understanding and knowledge in many subjects have been identified and are being addressed through additional training.
- Senior and middle leaders skilfully decide how to make improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers are involved in tracking and monitoring the progress of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils. However, they do not use this information consistently well to ensure that pupils consolidate and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. Consequently, some pupils do not make very strong progress in English and mathematics.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is deployed effectively to improve their progress across the curriculum. Leaders review the impact of the expenditure to ensure that it has the impact required to improve pupils' academic and social skills.
- The management of provision for pupils with SEND is effective. The school has an inclusive ethos where these pupils are enabled to access the curriculum successfully, relative to their starting points. Leaders assess pupils' needs accurately, and ensure that funding is allocated to meet them. Leaders meet regularly with staff, pupils and parents to evaluate the impact of the various specific approaches.
- The curriculum is interesting and varied, enthusing pupils to learn about a breadth of subjects. For example, in Year 6, pupils read and discuss scientific explanations about events in the natural world, such as in Richard Dawkins' book, 'The Magic of Reality'.
- Leaders spend the primary sports premium funding effectively. A specialist PE teacher teaches pupils a range of sports such as cricket, gymnastics and athletics. As a result, pupils make strong progress in the development of their physical coordination and physical health.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well throughout the curriculum. Leaders and staff support pupils to develop their emotional and social skills so that they can communicate well with each other and resolve any difficulties independently. As a consequence, the majority of pupils are able swiftly to overcome barriers to their learning.
- Senior leaders have prioritised the development of subject leadership. Drawing on both internal and external training with the local authority, leaders ensure that subject leaders share pertinent training with staff. Subject leaders are also enabled to monitor the impact of training and provide additional support to staff where necessary.
- Leaders have strengthened the teaching and learning of phonics through providing effective training and revision of the provision. Consequently, pupils currently learn to

read well.

Governance of the school

- Following a period of turbulence, the governing body has strengthened its knowledge of the school and now holds leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors continue to challenge other leaders to ensure that the good pace of improvement is maintained and effective.
- Governors gather a breadth of information through visits, reading reports and analysing information about pupils. As a result, governors are well placed to pose challenging questions.
- Governors are passionate about ensuring that all pupils receive a good quality of education. Their work both challenges and supports the school's improvement priorities. For example, governors continuously evaluate the impact of the school's strategies to support the few pupils who need help to behave properly.
- Governors bring a breadth of valuable experience to their roles. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for continued improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff have had up-to-date training and are aware of the most current legislation. They are aware of their safeguarding duties, including the need to look out for pupils who may be in danger of being radicalised.
- Leaders are highly knowledgeable about the families and communities that the school serves. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring the physical and emotional safety of pupils at the school. Working in collaboration with external agencies, leaders work hard to ensure that pupils receive the help they need.
- Safeguarding documentation about pupils is kept securely. Leaders review information about pupils regularly, ensuring that the information is detailed, with clear actions.
- Staff know pupils very well and are alert to any signs that may suggest that pupils may be at risk of harm. Pupils told inspectors that they felt safe at the school and that staff always helped with any concerns they may express.
- Health and safety risk-assessment systems are robust. For example, the log of incidents in the playground that required first aid is meticulously updated, and additional staff are on call, both in the school building and playground, to attend to any issue if needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Improvements in the quality of monitoring, challenge and support for teachers and teaching assistants have led to a higher quality of teaching across the school. Pupils make better progress in many areas of the curriculum as a result.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have established strong, nurturing relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and respond to tasks with enthusiasm. For

example, Year 6 pupils were observed passionately debating strategies to solve fractions and percentages through the medium of games.

- The teaching of phonics is effective. It is embedded well throughout early years and key stage 1. Pupils develop accurate knowledge and understanding of the link between sounds and letters and words. Pupils enjoy reading and are able to read new words using their phonics knowledge.
- Pupils apply their knowledge of grammar and spelling to their writing to ensure accuracy. Pupils enjoy writing for a breadth of audiences, purposes and text types. For example, Year 4 pupils wrote poems about mountains with insightful consideration for their language choices.
- Pupils read regularly for pleasure. Pupils develop their understanding and knowledge of how an author’s language choices shape the expression of ideas, characters and settings. However, teachers do not consistently and systematically build pupils’ knowledge of vocabulary and grammar to help them evaluate reading texts with enhanced confidence and greater success.
- Teachers develop pupils’ fluency in applying addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to a breadth of problems. In addition, teachers support pupils to consider strategies to solve mathematical equations and to explain their reasoning well.
- Teachers maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills in each area of the curriculum. For example, teachers develop pupils’ skills and knowledge of hypothesis, experimentation and evaluation in science lessons well. An inspector observed Year 6 pupils drawing on prior scientific knowledge, articulating their ideas with perception and accuracy, when discussing the effects of the cross-breeding of animals.
- Teachers do not consistently use information about pupils’ prior learning to inform the planning of sequences of lessons. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, do not make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of PE is strong. Through well-structured, sequenced tasks and activities, pupils develop good hand-to-eye coordination skills and physical agility.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils with SEND through clear explanations and well-targeted questions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They like their lessons and their teachers. Pupils are supportive, welcoming and friendly towards their peers and adults.
- Through the curriculum, pupils have many opportunities to explore other faiths and to reflect on their emotional well-being. For example, an inspector observed Year 5 pupils discussing their emotional responses to friendship disputes. Pupils demonstrated empathy and kindness while listening to the difficult experiences of their classmates.
- Pupils are highly inclusive of others. For example, pupils with SEND are included in

every aspect of school life.

- Pupils learn about the importance of saying safe on the internet. Many pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 told inspectors that strangers had approached them through the internet while playing online computer games at home. The pupils all knew the importance of informing an adult when this happens.
- Pupils gain an understanding of responsibility as citizens through the curriculum, such as by campaigning for election to the student council, where they discuss issues about the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons and around the school. They use the school's resources such as the gymnastics equipment and large musical instruments on the field with care and consideration. Pupils take turns well and demonstrate kindness and empathy to each other.
- Although leaders have established strong systems at the school for managing behaviour, a few pupils continue to flout the rules for classroom behaviour. Leaders constantly review incidents of misbehaviour to check that the complex social and emotional needs of a few misbehaving pupils are met. Having established a breadth of approaches, leaders continue to monitor the impact of support. Additionally, some teachers do not routinely reinforce the school's behaviour policy, resulting in continued low-level disruption by a few pupils.
- Rates of attendance have improved for all groups of pupils and are now in line with the national average. Leaders are proactive in tackling low attendance. They work with families and external agencies to support parents' understanding of the link between attendance and achievement in school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have acted decisively and swiftly to address the decline in attainment that resulted in below-average progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 6 and Year 2 in 2018. Scrutiny of pupils' books, observations of lessons and in-school data demonstrate that the school is addressing pupils' weaknesses effectively. Pupils are taught well and make stronger progress in many areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils read and write well. They apply their English skills and knowledge generally accurately and effectively. As a result of the revision of the teaching and learning of reading and writing, pupils currently make better progress than previously. Pupils have opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Disadvantaged pupils' achievement in many areas of the curriculum has improved as a result of the closer monitoring and support that they receive.
- Having reviewed coverage of the wider curriculum, leaders and staff have ensured that pupils make stronger progress in many subject areas such as PE, history and

geography. Through sequences of lessons, pupils develop strong knowledge and understanding.

- Year 1 pupils' phonics achievements are much improved. Most pupils are able to apply their phonics skills and knowledge to reading texts successfully. As a result, Year 1 pupils are prepared well for study in Year 2.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress from their differing starting points. Through well-structured support that meets their individual needs, they develop good knowledge and understanding about a range of subjects.
- Although pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress, they do not make particularly strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Some pupils' misconceptions, and gaps in their prior learning, are not addressed sufficiently well to enable them to accelerate their understanding.

Early years provision

Good

- Children develop strong communication and language skills through well-structured activities and effective support by adults, both in the Reception and Nursery classes. The proportion of children making a good level of development has improved markedly and was in line with the national average in 2018.
- Leadership of early years is strong. Assessment and tracking of children's achievement are very effective, enabling staff to build on and develop children's skills, understanding and knowledge.
- Children are highly engaged by the stimulating range of well-structured indoor and outdoor tasks and activities. For example, Nursery and Reception children relish the opportunities to explore plants and animals in the spinney.
- Children maintain their concentration well and do not flit between activities. For example, an inspector observed children in Reception focusing intently on developing their ball skills.
- Through the curriculum, children develop knowledge about the natural world. For example, children in both Nursery and Reception learn about how plants grow through planting seeds and monitoring their growth.
- Children are immersed in make-believe worlds where they can experiment with language and develop their social skills. Reception children have opportunities to pretend to operate a florist's shop using subject-specific language very effectively.
- Adults intervene appropriately to support children's learning through targeted questioning, prompts and discussion.
- Staff have positive relationships with parents through effective communication. Parents respond to the online learning journal, enabling staff to link home and school learning.

School details

Unique reference number	123079
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10088136

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hayley Munro
Headteacher	Jess Butler
Telephone number	01235 814 718
Website	www.stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	admin.2594@stephen-freeman.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The school operates a Nursery for five days a week.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with small numbers of pupils from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of education, health and care plans is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons, many jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons and looked at pupils' books.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of pupils from various year groups. Discussions with school staff, including senior leaders, middle leaders and two governors, were held.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, information on pupils' outcomes, and records relating to monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment, and behaviour and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of 66 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, alongside 66 text responses, 21 staff responses to the staff questionnaire and 16 pupil responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Susan Aykin, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christopher Crouch	Ofsted Inspector
Rekha Bhakoo	Ofsted Inspector

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