

Dry Sandford Primary School

Lashford Lane, Dry Sandford, Abingdon, OX13 6EE

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Due to the headteacher regularly monitoring lessons and providing good advice to staff, teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now typically good.
- Other senior leaders have contributed to this improvement by monitoring the teaching in lessons and pupils' work in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- Lessons are consistently well planned with tasks that meet the abilities of different groups of pupils, especially the requirements of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs.
- As a result of the improvements in teaching, all groups of pupils are making good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good, and behaviour is typically good. As a result pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn and feel safe.
- Governors are well informed because they hold the school to account, through effective questioning of senior leaders about the performance of the school, and in particular about the quality of teaching and how well pupils progress in their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Teachers do not always provide for more-able older pupils to fully develop their reading skills, and they sometimes spend too long talking to pupils, particularly in their introductions to lessons.
- As a result, time is sometimes wasted in getting pupils, especially the more able, quickly down to work on tasks that test their ability to think for themselves.
- Pupils are not consistently given time to work on the advice that teachers give them in marking about how to improve their work.
- Senior leaders, other than the headteacher, do not regularly observe teaching in different subjects. As a result they miss opportunities to learn more generally how to improve the quality of teaching in their own subject areas.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 12 lessons and part-lessons, five jointly with the headteacher, and observed five teachers.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils.
- The inspector examined a range of evidence including: the school's documentation relating to safeguarding; the school's own judgements about teaching and pupils' achievement; minutes recording governing body meetings; and pupils' progress tracking data. He also evaluated the quality of work in pupils' books, and heard a number of pupils read.
- The inspector analysed the views of 12 parents who responded to the Ofsted on-line Parent View survey.

Inspection team

James Henry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Dry Sandford is smaller than the average sized primary school with pupils in Key Stage 2 being taught in mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, whose parents are in the armed forces, or who are known to be eligible for free school meals, is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically outstanding by:
 - ensuring teachers' explanations are not too long, and pupils, especially the more able, are given more time to work by themselves on tasks that test their thinking and problem-solving skills
 - ensuring pupils are given consistent opportunities to work towards responding to the comments that teachers give in marking on how to improve their work
 - strengthen the role of senior leaders in observing teaching throughout the school so that they can give advice, share ideas, and provide the continuing professional development that will help teachers produce lessons where learning is outstanding.
- Increase the progress of older more-able pupils in reading by the end of Year 6 by:
 - widening the variety of material pupils read, and improving their ability to scan different texts so they can accurately and quickly summarise information
 - providing more opportunities to develop pupils' ability to think about and discuss different texts so they can give their more informed opinions about the material they read.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Years 2 and 6 when compared with pupils nationally. This includes those in receipt of pupil premium, and as a result the school is successfully raising their attainment and closing the achievement gap when compared with all pupils nationally. For example, the average points score (a method of measuring pupils attainment) by the end of Key Stage 2, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly below all pupils nationally in English but broadly in-line in mathematics.
- Children normally enter the school with the skills and abilities expected for their age. Assessments show they make good progress in The Early Years Foundation Stage and across Years 1 and 2, especially in their early reading and writing skills. This was shown when pupils were heard reading, demonstrating that they could break down the different parts in unfamiliar words, and sound them out accurately.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across the whole of Key Stage 2, especially in writing and mathematics, although progress in these subjects tends to be more rapid in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Progress in reading is not as quick as in writing and mathematics, especially for more-able pupils.
- The school ensures that all pupils are included in the school's activities and have an equal opportunity to learn. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equally good progress throughout the school because they are given tasks in lessons that are tailored to their abilities, and they are well supported by teaching assistants.
- Attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 varies over time from above to broadly in line with the national average due to the small numbers in classes making comparisons with national data difficult. However, by the end of Year 6 attainment in mathematics is generally higher than in English, due to the progress of more-able pupils slowing in reading across Key Stage 2. As a result this group of pupils do not consistently achieve the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Across the school pupils are now making good progress overall because of the improvements in the quality of teaching, which can be clearly seen in lessons.
- For example, pupils in Year 1 were progressing well in their writing skills through producing long pieces of writing based on the traditional story of 'The Three Little Pigs' without consistent help from staff.
- Also, pupils in Year 2 were seen progressing quickly through using sounds learnt in reading lessons to spell words they needed to write a newspaper article based on a book called 'Micro-World'.

The quality of teaching

is good

- All the parents who responded to the Parent View Survey on the Ofsted website thought that their children were taught well. This was also the view expressed by pupils.
- Teachers plan lessons well and provide activities that test and stretch pupils' abilities. Consequently, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress over time.
- However, progress for more-able pupils slows in reading because they are not always stretched in developing their reading skills, or given enough opportunities to discuss different types of reading material in order to form opinions about what they read. Opportunities are also missed to teach all pupils how to scan and summarise information from different texts.
- Teachers make effective use of questioning and support through checking pupils' work to help them understand what they are learning in lessons. However, sometimes teachers spend too long talking to pupils, especially at the beginning of lessons, and time is wasted by not allowing pupils to get on with the different activities planned, especially for more capable pupils who are

able to work independently.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, and pupils' misunderstandings are identified and corrected. For example in a Years 3 and 4 mathematics lesson some pupils misunderstood the task of counting the number of triangles using fractions. This was quickly spotted by the teacher and corrected, and pupils were able to continue making good progress in their learning.
- Teachers mark work regularly and put comments in pupils' books about how they can improve. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities or time in the school day to work on the advice that teachers give them. As a result marking is not used as effectively as it could be.
- Teachers know their pupils well, and teaching assistants provide effective support to the varying needs of pupils by consistently helping them with their work in lessons. As a result relationships between staff and pupils are good and pupils feel confident they will be given the help they need to learn well in lessons.
- Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development through different topics such as the school's citizenship programme, and through pupils being encouraged to organise charity events, such as the 'MacMillan Cancer Fund Coffee Morning'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils say they feel safe in school, that behaviour is typically good, and that bullying is very rare. They also say that they have the confidence in staff to deal with any concerns or problems that may arise.
- Consequently, pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn, and lessons are not disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. However, sometimes pupils can lose concentration in lessons if the teacher spends too long explaining activities.
- The overwhelming number of parents who responded to the Parent View Survey felt that the school kept their children safe, and dealt effectively with any cases of bullying.
- The school effectively helps pupils keep themselves safe through a variety of activities. For example, pupils visit the local fire station where the emergency services, including the police, come together to help pupils recognise possible dangerous situations and understand how to stay safe in different circumstances. Also internet safety is taught as part of the curriculum.
- Staff know their pupils well, and there is a good balance of rewards for good behaviour and correction of any inappropriate behaviour. Consequently, relationships are good throughout the school, with pupils being polite and courteous towards staff and each other.
- The school actively promotes the need for good attendance and punctuality. As a result attendance is above the national average and almost all pupils arrive at school on time.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own behaviour, especially when learning in lessons.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully improved the quality of teaching through regular and accurate monitoring and by providing advice to teachers on how to improve their lessons. This is linked to professional training for staff where appropriate.
- Other senior leaders have helped by checking pupils' work and observing the teaching in the subjects they are responsible for. However, senior leaders do not regularly monitor teaching in other subjects and opportunities are missed to give advice and share ideas that will help teachers produce lessons where learning is outstanding.
- The headteacher, helped by other senior leaders, manages the performance of staff through checking the accurate assessments that teachers make on the progress of pupils in their classes and using them to improve their progress. As a result, staff are given targets to ensure that any pupils in their classes who may be falling behind are well supported and catch up as quickly as

possible.

- Senior leaders are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have focused particularly on improving the system of tracking pupils' progress. This has enabled them, together with the teachers, to ensure that all groups of pupils are making good progress, including those in receipt of pupil premium, and to target areas of weakness. For example, the success of the real effort to improve standards in writing can be seen in the good progress pupils are making in writing across the school.
 - The school works effectively with other local schools to share ideas about how to improve teaching and to undertake professional training for staff. Parents and the local community are welcomed into the school and as a result the school fosters good relationships in the local area.
 - The school has been in receipt of support from the local authority, especially in developing the system to assess pupils' progress across the school.
 - The subjects that are taught in school are broad and balanced and, coupled with the other activities provided for pupils, help promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the local vicar takes assemblies, parents from different backgrounds are invited to speak to pupils about their cultures and faith, and pupils benefit from links with other local schools that enable them to go on outdoor activity residential visits.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They make regular visits to classes, receive reports on the quality of teaching, and question senior leaders about the performance of the school, especially pupils' achievement. As a result, they have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing compared with pupils nationally. Through checking the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils, governors decided to address pupils' slower progress in reading, wisely using pupil premium funding to provide them with more reading books, helping to ensure that they kept pace with other pupils in the school. The governing body manages the performance of the headteacher through setting robust targets to further improve the school, and ensures that teacher salaries are clearly linked to performance. Governors undertake regular, appropriate training, for example on safer recruitment, and train with other school governors on monitoring mathematics. The governing body ensures that the school's safeguarding policies are reviewed regularly and that all procedures are robust and secure.
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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	123063
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	402129

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Bartlett
Headteacher	Karen Harrington
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2009
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