

Larkrise Primary School

Boundary Brook Road, Oxford, OX4 4AN

Inspection dates 6–7 February 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The strong leadership of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors has successfully created a skilled, dedicated and enthusiastic team. Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection.
- Nearly all pupils make good progress, with attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 rising, particularly in mathematics.
- Children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the outdoor environment is used well.
- Behaviour is outstanding and pupils feel very safe in school, as confirmed by their parents.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, to each other and relationships with adults are exemplary and contribute to their evident high quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils read widely and enjoy reading. The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) is good and well structured, with results above national average.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, so pupils' progress and attainment are improving.
- Teachers plan exciting lessons that meet the needs of different groups and abilities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in Key Stage 1 is not yet as strong as it is elsewhere in school.
- Sometimes teachers and teaching assistants explain ideas for too long when pupils already understand, and do not move them on to harder tasks quickly enough, especially in mathematics.
- Some parents have concerns about communication, particularly with regard to new initiatives and the way they can support their children in reading.
- The gradually improving attendance since the last inspection needs to become established.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 30 lessons, or part lessons; seven of these lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body and local authority, and staff, including middle and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of 61 responses to the online Parent View. They also spoke informally with parents and looked at the results of the school's own recent survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, governors' minutes, the school's own self-evaluation, achievement data, monitoring records and documents relating to the safeguarding of children.

Inspection team

John Croghan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jan Edwards

Additional Inspector

Neil Gillespie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding provided by the government for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- No pupils are taught in any alternative provision.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is a Nursery and two Reception classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and further accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers' marking shows pupils how to improve, and that pupils are given the chance to improve their work by following the advice contained in marking
 - ensuring that teachers provide further demanding tasks as soon as possible for pupils who are ready to move ahead, especially in mathematics.
- Ensure that the progress made by all pupils is consistently good, and particularly those in Key Stage 1 by:
 - using the good tracking to more precisely establish the progress made by individual pupils, in order to target specific help in particular year groups or classes where it is most needed.
- Improve communication with parents by:
 - increasing parent awareness of new teaching strategies and school improvement plans
 - using reading diaries more effectively to show the skills and strategies that are being focused on for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' progress in all year groups has improved since the previous inspection. This is particularly true at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, where most children make good progress, gain in confidence and develop well.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above average, and results in 2012 in mathematics and English were the highest in recent years, with many pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in both subjects.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average but the school's current data show progress to be improving from below average starting points on entry in Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills, with the younger pupils showing real understanding of letters and sounds (phonics) in Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1. This is helping them move ahead quickly and gain confidence in reading. This was confirmed by the good recent results in the national phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1.
- Pupils' progress has generally been stronger in English than mathematics, and improvements to progress and attainment in mathematics remain a priority for the school.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving because their needs are now more clearly identified and appropriate resources, including teaching assistants, are used to support individual pupils' need. As a consequence, the gap is closing between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who qualify for the pupil premium, including those entitled to free school meals, also receive good quality extra help, so there has also been a significant reduction in the attainment gap for these pupils, as measured by average points scores, compared to previous years and other pupils nationally.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those whose first language is not English make good progress from low starting points.
- The school has improved the way it uses the detailed records it keeps with regard to pupils' progress and attainment, so that more pupils in all current classes are making good progress. However, the school does not always use this information to target support most effectively to the classes and year groups where it is most needed, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- The quality of pupils' written work has improved and pupils have opportunities to write when they are doing work on their topics. This has given greater relevance to what they write and makes good links with other subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching over time is good, with several examples of outstanding learning seen during the inspection. In most of the good or better lessons, teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations. Their planning creates interesting and enjoyable lessons and activities, in which pupils are encouraged to show initiative and independence.
- Since the previous inspection, the use of targets in lessons and written work has improved pupils' understanding of their learning and has enabled the quality of feedback to pupils to be more meaningful. These improvements in marking and feedback are seen across the school but are not yet consistent enough in all classes and subjects.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is founded on purposeful and well-structured practical activities, indoors and outside, that show real understanding of how children learn. The discovery of a potato, for example, when digging was an outstanding experience for everyone, who was fortunate enough to be there. These activities are used well to engage the children well in developing key skills such as letter formation and counting. A strong focus on speaking and listening supports the progress of all children, including those for whom English is not a first language.

- The progress of pupils is checked three times a year so that teachers and leaders can share results and agree or adjust targets. Recent improvements in checking progress mean that extra help is given to those individual pupils and groups who need it. This means that pupils who fall behind are given good extra support, which has enabled improvement in their attainment, particularly during Key Stage 2. This checking has yet to improve levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, although progress is improving.
- The good achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well supported by interventions based on good assessments, so that teaching assistants and teachers are addressing gaps in pupils learning. Very similar support enables pupils eligible for the pupil premium to make good progress, as well as those with English as an additional language or from different ethnic backgrounds.
- In some lessons, teachers use questions well and introduce the targets and tasks clearly, with good use of partner talk and mini whiteboards. In others, teachers spend too much time giving explanations when pupils are ready to start work. This does not allow them enough time to produce work and so reduces their opportunity to make progress. This is particularly evident in mathematics.
- Detailed reading records are regularly updated and maintained for all pupils, and teaching assistants are now timetabled at specific times to particularly support individual and group reading and phonics in Key Stage 1. Reading volunteers from Oxford University are used well to support reading from Years 1 to 6, but there remain issues around home/school communication over the importance of reading. Guided reading is part of the teaching day in every classroom.
- Pupils say they enjoy school because lessons are usually fun and interesting; as one pupil said, 'I like lessons because teachers make them exciting.' They like their topic work and the range of other subjects such as art, science and physical education, and particularly mentioned the enjoyment when they go on visits and residential trips. Topics on China, Brazil and Uganda are particularly appreciated, as are all the opportunities given to understand and learn about other religions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning and their exceptional behaviour contributes very effectively to the learning environment in lessons. Concentration levels are high, even when they are sometimes being talked to for too long, so that their enthusiasm and willingness to be involved is continually available to teachers and teaching assistants.
- The school fosters warm relationships extremely well. Pupils are extremely kind and respectful to each other, not only in classrooms, but also around school at playtimes, in corridors and lunchtimes. They understand the different types of bullying that can occur and are well aware of issues related to internet safety. They feel that incidents of bullying are rare and that if they occur, they are dealt with immediately.
- The school has a warm and welcoming ethos that parents and pupils appreciate. Parent responses on Parent View on the recent school questionnaire show that they have confidence in the care and safety that the school provides for their children.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and know that 'although there is no uniform, the school certainly has rules'. There is a level of confidence in pupils, evident from the very youngest in the Nursery to Year 6, that allows and supports the very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of school life, as well as a clear awareness held by pupils of these issues in the wider world.
- Attendance has improved slowly but consistently since the previous inspection and is now slightly above average, and this has contributed to the improved attainment and progress of pupils. Persistent absence is down and punctuality is good.
- Pupils with additional learning, health and social needs are supported very well and make good progress as a result. This is indicative of the effectiveness of the school's promotion of equal

opportunities for all.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, leads the school well. Pupils, staff and parents understand vision and values of the school as represented by the five 'C's: celebration, caring, curiosity, creativity and confidence, which provide a good foundation for school improvements.
- The school has a very strong creative curriculum, the 'Storytelling Curriculum', that is enjoyed by pupils, which combined with good teaching, gives a strong basis for the development of basic skills in all subjects and a real structure to create the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and understanding of pupils.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear understanding of the qualities of good or better teaching so they have been able to monitor this effectively and provide extra support where necessary.
- Performance management is closely linked to the professional development of teachers. Systems to support the detailed checking of pupil progress are now more rigorous and leaders are using the information to make teachers more accountable for the individual progress of pupils they teach.
- The school's own self-evaluation processes are robust so school development planning is based on good understanding of the areas for improvement. The improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement since the previous inspection are testament to the success of these processes and show that the school is well placed to continue to improve.
- The school works well with parents, with recent surveys and interviews indicating that a large majority of parents are very supportive of the school and its leadership. Some parents would like to see better communications, particularly in reading, and new initiatives undertaken by school, such as the current one aimed at improving attainment in mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors monitor and evaluate the work of the school well, including weekly meetings with the headteacher. They understand how the school is performing against national benchmarks and are currently developing greater understanding of the school's own data on pupils' achievement. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of relative weakness. They hold senior leaders to account for the school's performance, particularly the quality of teaching. Governors are aware of their own development needs and have made good strategic decisions with support from the local authority and other external agencies. Members of the governing body apply their range of different skills to benefit the school, and monitor issues around equal opportunities and discrimination with good awareness of their importance. They effectively manage the performance of the headteacher, and ensure that pay rewards for leaders and teachers are closely related to performance, particularly related to the progress of pupils. Governors make sure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are consistently applied. They know how the school budget is spent and make sure, for example, that additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used well to support pupils' achievement. This funding has been spent on additional staffing to directly support pupils in improving their progress in reading and mathematics. The school is effective in narrowing any gap between the attainment of individuals eligible for the funding and other pupils.

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	123053
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	402128

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	455
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Terry
Headteacher	Mark Chesterton
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2010
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