

Nash Mills Church of England Primary School

Belswains Lane, Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9XB

Inspection dates 13–14 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leadership and management are good. The school is led effectively by the headteacher. With senior staff and governors, she has secured improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 6 an above average proportion exceed the level expected for their age in English and mathematics.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Relationships are good and pupils are friendly, caring and supportive of each other. They say they feel safe in school and their attendance is above average.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding practice. Lessons are well planned because the needs of every child are carefully considered. Good use is made of marking and pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. Pupils are motivated to learn.
- The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Leaders demonstrate ambition and skill to drive up improvement and raise pupils' achievement further.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have high expectations of all pupils. Strong teamwork including good support from the local authority have made a significant impact on moving this school from satisfactory to good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure all pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- In some lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunity to think and learn by themselves because teachers lead all the activities.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made short visits to lessons. All teachers were observed. Inspectors listened to pupils from several classes read.
- Inspectors took account of 58 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed questionnaires from 26 members of staff.
- Inspectors evaluated the work of the school and looked at a range of documents, including those relating to the monitoring of teaching, performance management documentation, minutes of governors’ meetings, case studies relating to support for vulnerable pupils, records relating to attendance and behaviour, safeguarding and pupils’ assessment information, as well as examples of pupils’ work.
- They held discussions with several members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Liz Kissane

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Nash Mills Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary school is of average size.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, but an above average proportion of pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Very few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those pupils whose families are serving with the armed forces, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection a number of teachers have left the school and new teachers have joined, including two newly qualified teachers who were appointed to the school in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching to further improve pupils' progress and their achievement by;
 - ensuring that all teachers provide pupils with sufficient time and opportunities to work more actively and independently in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin school with skills and experiences generally below those expected for their age. By the time pupils leave school, at the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards over the past few years has been above the national average in English and mathematics. This represents good achievement. In 2012 there was a slight dip in writing. This has been addressed robustly by the school and the current analysis of performance data and pupils' work all indicate that the current rate of progress is good.
- All children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. For example, Reception children were encouraged to talk about and explore at first hand the difference between photographs and videos using digital cameras and an I-Pad. They were responding very well to each other's views and learning with enjoyment and excitement. Most children reach levels expected for their age when they move into Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress when they move through the school. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the expected two levels of progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics has been consistently above national expectations. In some instances, pupils' progress is exceptional; for example in mathematics where a high proportion of pupils exceeded the expected levels for their age.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in developing their understanding of letters and sounds (phonics). Reading is well taught and pupils have plenty of opportunities to read during the school day. Their reading is fluent and they show a good understanding of what they read.
- Observations during the inspection, together with information from the monitoring and tracking system used by the school, indicate that different groups of pupils including those from minority ethnic groups, make good progress from their individual starting points. Carefully directed support, including that provided by teaching assistants has had a positive impact on the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils are making consistently good progress across the school and achieving as well as their peers.
- Pupil premium funds are well used to provide intensive teaching for small groups, one-to-one support and additional resources for learning. Consequently, pupils for whom this funding is allocated make the same good progress as others. In the 2012 tests at the end of Year 6, these pupils scored above the national average for their group.
- Pupils displayed good skills in reading, writing and communication in many of the lessons observed. In Year 6, pupils were using their observational and writing skills to describe in poetry, pictures of old age. Pupils were seen to share their reactions, to listen and then provide feedback, including peer assessment on the quality of work. Their language was thoughtful and reflective as they used phrases such as 'every wrinkle tells a story' and 'week by week, weaker and weaker'.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are used increasingly well in other subjects. For example, work in topics provides plentiful opportunities for pupils to write and to apply their mathematical knowledge, for example, to calculate from graphs.

The quality of teaching is good

- There has been a sustained focus on improving teaching since the previous inspection so that teaching is good with an increasing proportion of outstanding teaching. These findings are endorsed by positive parent and pupil views.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour in lessons. Relationships are very good, because teachers know their pupils well, and pupils work hard to please their teachers. Mutual respect and support between teachers and pupils helps to create positive attitudes to learning throughout the school.
- Teachers make increasingly good use of questions to check on pupils' understanding and to develop their thinking. In the best examples, teachers give pupils time to think, explain and share their ideas with the class. In a science lesson, pupils were absorbed in group discussions as they investigated what happens to an elastic band put under pressure. The teacher probed their perceptions in order to deepen their understanding.
- Lesson planning has improved and is based on teachers' knowledge of pupils' learning. Teachers increasingly use effective methods to assess how well pupils are learning during lessons. Pupils are aware of what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve their work. The quality of feedback through marking is good and pupils are given time to respond. This is helping pupils to move on quickly to the next level.
- Pupils learn well when they work together in lessons, sharing ideas and providing mutual support. They respond particularly well when they are given the chance to take an active part in their learning. In lessons where pupils' learning is not as rapid, pupils spend too long listening to the teacher. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn independently and from each other through group activities.
- Teaching of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs is effective in helping them to make good progress, as is support for those entitled to free school meals.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy learning and work hard to succeed. Their attitudes in class are consistently good and often exemplary. There is a positive ethos around the school which contributes to good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Caring, vigilant staff ensure that pupils feel safe in school. Surveys of parents, carers and staff, and discussions with pupils, confirm the view that behaviour is good overall and that the school is a safe place for learning.
- Pupils show respect to each other and adults. They know the rules and follow them sensibly. Incidents are recorded and dealt with appropriately. School records show that good behaviour is typical. Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' high enjoyment of school life.
- Pupils report few instances of bullying, including racist, homophobic or cyber bullying. They say that when this does occur it is dealt with promptly by the school. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe and benefit from a good quality personal, social and health education programme. They are taught to assess risks for themselves, and they have a good understanding of how to minimise the risks attached to internet use.
- Pupils have a real role in improving their school and in helping it to run smoothly. The school

council acts upon suggestions for improvement from pupils and the recently introduced 'Reflections' Council is making a real difference to the spiritual life of the school. They have encouraged others to use the prayer board more often and set up a well attended family assembly which took place during the inspection and was a great success.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is well regarded by staff, pupils, parents, carers and governors. She has taken the school from strength to strength and has been well supported in this by a skilled deputy headteacher and dedicated senior team. Together, they have a comprehensive and accurate picture of where the school needs to improve. This enables them to identify key priorities, which are then successfully tackled.
- Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and there have been significant improvements to teaching and achievement over recent years. Pupils' learning is enriched by a wide-ranging and interesting curriculum. Music and sport are important in the school, as are the visits and visitors used to widen pupils' views of the world around them. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The performance management of staff is carried out in a rigorous and supportive way. The national standards for teachers are used effectively to evaluate the quality of teaching. Professional development is tailored to teachers' needs. Consequently, the quality of teaching has improved.
- Effective tracking systems keep a close check on pupils' progress and allow teachers to spot quickly any risk of underachievement. The effectiveness of these systems is seen clearly in the closing gaps between different groups so they make consistent progress.
- The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies and lessons is very good and is strength of the school. The school actively promotes respect and understanding of cultural diversity. Pupils are taught to value each other and the wider world through external links, charity events and a range of enrichment opportunities.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness and the school has valued and benefited from the support offered in recent years. It now provides 'light touch' support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have high levels of relevant expertise and experience and they have used these to put systems and structures in place which provide challenge and hold the headteacher and leaders to account for the school's performance. They have a good understanding of data therefore they know how well pupils achieve and are aware of the school's performance compared to other schools. They visit the school regularly and check the progress the school makes against the school improvement plan. Governors are involved in discussions of the performance management of staff. They manage the finances at the school effectively, in particular the link between staff salary progression and performance. They track the allocation and impact of the pupil premium using the money to make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. They ensure statutory requirements are met, particularly for safeguarding pupils and child protection. Governors also attend training to improve their practice further.

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	117418
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	405704

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Oliver Shaw
Headteacher	Rosie Washford-Mower
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2011
Telephone number	01442 252972
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