

William Morris School

Bretch Hill, Banbury, OX16 0UZ

Inspection dates 16–17 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress has been inconsistent in recent years in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement has sometimes been good in each aspect, but not in all three in the same year.
- Many pupils made expected progress last year, but too few made good progress in order to reach the standards expected for their age.
- Not enough teaching is consistently good or better for all pupils to reach their potential. Some teachers' marking of pupils' work does not give sufficient guidance to them on how they can improve.
- Although pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, from low starting points, are improving, pupils are not guided and supported effectively enough in developing independent learning skills.
- Until this year, the leadership and management of the school have depended too much on the headteacher, especially in tracking the progress of pupils in the school, and in monitoring the quality of teaching.

The school has the following strengths

- The caring leadership of the headteacher is a significant strength in the creation of a happy, safe and calm environment where pupils begin their education.
- Pupils are cheerful and enthusiastic about their learning, behave well and show respect to each other and adults. Their attendance and punctuality are much improved in the last two years.
- Governance, with a mixture of experienced and new governors, is making an effective contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
- Pupils who are supported by the additional pupil premium funding are making progress at least as good as that of all other pupils in the school in English and mathematics.
- Parents are very pleased with the school and its nurturing staff, especially with the way it cares for their children and helps families needing support in difficult times.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by seven teachers. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, members of the management team and three governors. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They examined the school's improvement plans and its checks on how well it is doing, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety records, school policies, a range of pupils' work and information about their progress. They heard a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of 10 responses to the online Parent View survey. They also held informal discussions with parents before, during and after the school day.
- The inspectors examined 22 questionnaire responses from members of staff.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynn Alexander

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- William Morris School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils are White British, the remainder coming from a small range of other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- Almost half of the pupils are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families). This is much higher than average. There are currently no children of service families in the school.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has a nursery which children attend part-time in mornings or afternoons. There are single-year classes in Reception and Year 1. There are mixed-aged classes for Years 2/3, Years 3/4, Years 4/5 and Years 5/6. This can vary depending on the numbers of pupils in each year group.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that most becomes consistently good or better, enabling more pupils to make good progress by:
 - providing pupils with clear guidance, through marking in particular, on how to understand their learning and improve their skills
 - giving pupils sharper and more specific time targets for completing work, taking into account their individual learning skills
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning and research skills
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Develop further the leadership roles and responsibilities of subject leaders and managers by:
 - providing opportunities for them to support colleagues and contribute to school improvement more effectively, especially in the development of good teaching
 - contributing to eliminating inconsistency and building upon recent improvements in attainment so that all pupils reach their potential every year in reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding below, and sometimes well below, those expected for their age, especially in language and in personal and social skills.
- They make steady progress in their development in Nursery and Reception classes, although it is better in mathematical development than in reading and writing. School data show that progress has quickened this year.
- Progress for pupils in Years 1 and 2 has shown a steadily rising trend in the last two years, although by the end of Year 2, most pupils were still below national levels in reading and writing.
- In Years 3 to 6, the progress and achievement of pupils is improving. Prior to this year, not enough pupils have been reaching the levels expected nationally in reading and writing. This means that too many pupils have not achieved well enough, although progress throughout the school is now much better. Inspection evidence, for example, shows a majority of pupils making good progress in Years 3 and 4.
- Attainment has been variable in recent years. In 2011, pupils reached standards in English and mathematics close to the national average. In 2012, however, standards overall were lower. This was because pupils' attainment was much lower in reading than in writing and mathematics. Progress in this small Year 6 group was, however, similar overall to pupils nationally.
- The school's tracking, supported by lesson observations, hearing pupils read and scrutiny of work, shows that attainment is rising for current pupils but more needs to be done.
- While some pupils show average or better skills in calculation in mathematics, their difficulties with reading have made mathematical problem-solving that requires good reading skills much more challenging.
- The school has successfully introduced several new learning strategies to raise attainment, such as 'Code' reading books, and 'Numicon' in mathematics. Consequently, both the school's own analysis and inspection evidence confirm accelerated progress. This is particularly marked in reading, and in the number of more able pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics.
- Progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been too variable in recent years. Pupils supported through school action have sometimes achieved well in their learning. However, pupils who find learning difficult and are supported by school action plus have not achieved so well. Action taken by the school, through planning in more detail for the individual needs of these pupils, is now resulting in better progress by these pupils. The foundations are in place for sustained improvement over time.
- Reading standards have been rising consistently this year. This is as a result of action taken following well below average results in a screening test of pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) in Year 1 in 2012. The school has focused strongly upon teaching individuals and small groups of pupils so they have a better knowledge of reading skills, not only in Reception and Year 1, but also throughout all year groups.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They like reading regularly to adults in the school and name a wide variety of books such as '*Lily Alone*', and '*The Hobbit*', and even newspapers such as '*The Banbury Guardian*' which they read for pleasure.
- By the end of Year 6, most pupils who are supported through the pupil premium reach levels of attainment at least equal to, and sometimes better than, other pupils in the school in English and mathematics. There is no longer a gap between their attainment and that of others.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress over a sustained period of time.

- In recent years, pupils have, for example, sometimes made good progress in mathematics or writing, and in the last year, progress in raising reading skills has been much improved. However, until recently, teaching has not ensured that similarly good progress is made in all subjects at the same time.
- Teachers use a much improved range of information about pupils' progress to plan lessons with clear objectives for learning. However, when involved in their learning activities, pupils sometimes proceed at a leisurely pace and there is no great urgency for them to complete work because teachers do not always set times for completion.
- This is particularly evident when pupils are working independently in small groups or on their own. These pupils may not be confident in their understanding of their task, or are not set specific targets in their activities. Teachers also do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Teachers' marking has improved, but is not yet consistent in all classes in having a dialogue with pupils on how they are doing and their next steps in learning.
- A major strength of teaching is the excellent relationship between pupils and teachers. Teachers are especially caring and go to considerable lengths to nurture and care for all of their pupils, who respond with very positive attitudes to their learning and social development. This has a beneficial influence on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils.
- Where teaching is best, teachers are consistently challenging pupils, have excellent subject knowledge and encourage pupils to think for themselves.
- This was observed in the Year 5/6 class, when pupils formed a 'conscience alley' which helped them to understand how arguments can often be muddled and contradictory when, for example, discussing the merits of a student going around the world for a year. Similarly, pupils in Year 1 achieved well when their teacher and teaching assistants enabled them to work out how to use a programmable toy and develop their thinking skills.
- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants, who are involved in many support activities to help learning, such as phonic group work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. They also know how to behave safely, and older pupils look after younger children well. There have been no exclusions in the last three years.
- They talk enthusiastically about their learning, mentioning a wide variety of memorable activities. These include going to a pupil research group at Warwick University, ('we all graduated'), making an e-book of photo stories to send to another school, and trips to a toy museum and the Black Country museum.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage soon become familiar with what is expected of them and settle into daily routines and learn to work and play happily together.
- During the inspection, behaviour was consistently good and sometimes excellent. This was noted especially when pupils were aware that the oldest were sitting their national tests and the school was a haven of calmness and silence.
- Pupils have a particularly good knowledge of the school's behaviour policies and expectations, and very much appreciate the school's 'carrot rather than stick' approach. They learn well from their 'behaviour games'.
- Bullying is not identified as being a problem in school by pupils. They mention isolated examples of name-calling but say that regular anti-bullying days help everyone to live harmoniously together, and say 'anyway, teachers wouldn't allow physical bullying'.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the dangers of cyber-bullying, particularly through social media on the internet.
- The school works very effectively with external agencies and support groups to meet the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable or those who may have difficulty in managing their own behaviour. Pupils mention especially the help they receive from the school's

nurturing assistant.

- Attendance in the school has improved considerably in the last two years because of the strong measures taken by the school. It is now almost average when compared with other schools.
- Parents' responses and those of the staff were unanimous in agreeing with the view that pupils' behaviour is good and well managed by the school.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively in providing high standards of care and safety for the pupils of the school. This greatly helps to promote the personal and social development of many pupils.
- The headteacher has also been at the forefront of the continual drive for improvement of the achievement of pupils. Until recently, however, she has carried an excessive workload, and there has been an insufficient sharing of management responsibilities.
- This year, however, more leaders in the school have taken greater responsibility for different aspects of the school, for example in the management of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This has resulted in more effective teaching interventions and better progress by all these pupils. A new subject leader for mathematics has made a very promising start, which is resulting in more confident teaching of the subject and better progress by pupils.
- These initiatives indicate that the school has the capacity for more sustained and consistent improvement as a more widely distributed leadership continues its development.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning, mainly by the headteacher, is well planned and supportive and has led to some improvement in teaching and pupils' performance, although it is not yet resulting in enough consistently good or better teaching.
- Monitoring is linked closely to professional development and all teachers have clear targets on how they can improve their teaching.
- The school has developed a much wider range of interesting and exciting learning opportunities for pupils since the previous inspection. This, and pupils' good behaviour, has strengthened the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Use of the school pupil premium funding is closely monitored by the headteacher and governors and has led to increasingly better progress for these pupils. The funding has been used for a range of one-to-one support for readers throughout the school, extra teaching help for supporting these pupils in mathematics and a number of other interventions to help the most vulnerable pupils.
- School leaders promote equal opportunities in a strongly inclusive school. This is ensuring that there is no evidence of discrimination through gender, ethnic heritage, disability or special educational needs.
- The local authority has had little involvement with the school since the previous inspection. The school has used an external advisor and its involvement with other local small schools to help its further development.
- Parents express no concerns about the management of the school, and praise the leadership of the headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been a number of changes of governors recently, including the appointment of joint Chairs. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement, and are ensuring that all receive appropriate training. This is enabling them to challenge school leaders robustly and drive hard for improvement, as well as being very supportive. Governors are beginning to develop their skills in ensuring that staff performance is linked to pay, with particular reference to the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress. The governors are well informed about safeguarding and make sure that the school fully meets national requirements. Given the improvements in governance, inspectors are not recommending an external audit.

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	122998
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	412075

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	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Wilde and Maggie Twydell
Headteacher	Sally Newman
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 October 2009
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