

Barley Hill Primary School

Ludsden Grove, Thame, OX9 3DH

Inspection dates 28–29 April 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Leaders, including governors, have worked effectively to improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. They have achieved their aim of increasing pupils' achievement, which is now good.
- Standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics so that they are now significantly above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers plan lessons which challenge and engage pupils' interest, especially the most able who apply themselves exceptionally well.
- Teachers are overwhelmingly positive about the training and support they receive to help them develop their skills.
- Pupils behave well. They are courteous and respectful, play together harmoniously and have positive attitudes to learning.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection. This supports the views of parents who unanimously state that their children are happy at school.
- Pupils feel safe at school and say that the school teaches them how to stay safe in a range of situations.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The broad range of high quality sporting activities enhances pupils' physical well-being.
- Early years provision is good. Children are well prepared to start Year 1 because activities ensure they develop skills across a range of areas of learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils who finish their work quickly move on to another activity without delay. This slows their learning.
- Tasks are sometimes too difficult for some pupils whose starting points are lower. This limits their ability to make rapid and sustained progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, twelve of which were observed jointly with senior leaders. Lessons seen included the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they make), mathematics, writing, science and physical education.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read. They also looked closely at pupils' work in lessons, as well as work they have completed over time in their books.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body, including the Chair of Governors and the chairs of several sub-committees.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents including those relating to safeguarding and child protection, and logs of behaviour incidents and name-calling. They also looked at the school's own self-evaluation and development planning, checks made on the quality of teaching, and information about pupils' academic performance.
- Inspectors took into account the views of the 116 parents who completed the online Parent View survey, as well as the views of parents they spoke to during the course of the inspection. They also considered the responses to the 27 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector
Ben Jordan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than average. A disproportionate amount of these pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after) for just under one in ten pupils. This figure is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than average at just over 10%. About half of these pupils speak English as an additional language, a much smaller percentage than that found nationally. Very few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The early years provision comprises three Reception classes which all children attend full time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding by ensuring that:
 - pupils from all starting points make rapid and sustained progress
 - pupils who finish their work are enabled to quickly move on to another activity without delay
 - teachers provide tasks that are not too difficult for pupils from lower starting points to access.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, including governors, are ambitious for pupils to do well. This is reflected in the challenging progress rates they expect each class to make across the course of a year.
- Leadership is effective, as proven by the range of improvements instituted since the previous inspection in teaching, achievement and leadership itself.
- The system for managing teachers' performance is rigorous. Leaders make a range of checks across the year including observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' work in books. They identify strengths and areas of improvement so that they can give teachers clear pointers on how well they are doing and how to improve further.
- Middle leaders contribute well to school improvement. They analyse information about the progress of pupils in their year groups. Where needed, they support colleagues to ensure that this remains on track to meet the ambitious targets set.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure disadvantaged pupils make similar, or better, progress than their peers. Figures from 2014 show that, across Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' progress rates had risen sharply on the previous year. They were well above those of other pupils, both in school, and nationally. Taking into account the fact that numbers are low and there is often a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this group, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils currently in school remains good.
- Leaders foster good relationships. This is clearly evident in the positive interactions around the school and the respectful attitudes pupils have. Pupils understand what discrimination means and assert that it has no place in their school. Teachers plan topics that challenge stereotypes. For example, some of the youngest pupils were learning about Uganda (the school has strong links with a school there) and were shown pictures of gleaming skyscrapers and luxury hotels.
- Leaders' rigorous analysis of the progress of different groups to ensure they all succeed equally well is testament to the school's unswerving commitment to equal opportunities.
- Safeguarding is effective. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements. Governors check that this is the case. Pupils and parents have full confidence in the system, as reflected in the unanimous return against this question in the online Parent View survey.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Strong links across subjects mean pupils can revisit ideas throughout the day in different lessons. Topics start with an enticing 'hook' to engage pupils from the outset. Factual examples, experiments, visitors and trips bring things to life. This helps pupils embed concepts securely.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. It is clear about its values and encourages pupils to reflect on them continually. Assemblies and religious education lessons play a crucial part in developing pupils' ability to reflect deeply on spiritual issues. This links to their social development as they learn to navigate a range of social situations with increasing tact and empathy. Topics often allow pupils to explore moral dimensions, such as those in the First and Second World Wars. Pupils think about the implications for both sides of being involved in conflict. They think about the consequences of negative actions, for example in their understanding of bullying. A strong focus on the arts and the chance to learn a musical instrument enhance cultural development.
- There is a strong focus on British values, democracy and the rule of law, illustrated and referred to in high quality displays throughout the school. Visits to Oxford University promote British excellence and encourage pupils to have high aspirations. The careful attention to ensuring that pupils embrace diversity and look beyond stereotypes prepares them exceptionally well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education and sport funding effectively. After listening to pupils' views, leaders introduced a broader range of sporting opportunities. Taster sessions for newly introduced activities were used to good effect to encourage pupils who had hitherto not participated. Teachers have received training, following a survey to gauge how confident they felt in teaching elements of the physical education (PE) curriculum. This has resulted in higher quality physical education lessons and better participation rates which have had a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being.
- The local authority has supported the school well to make improvements since the previous inspection. Having seen how the school has managed this, local authority officers are secure that the school is now good. Support has therefore decreased, as the school now has the capacity to lead its own improvements from within.
- Leadership is not outstanding because there are still areas that need to be further improved. Pupils' outcomes are not yet outstanding from all their respective starting points.

■ The governance of the school:

Governance is effective. Governors challenge leaders well to continually improve pupils' outcomes. They use a range of information about academic performance to gauge how well their school compares to national figures. This gives them valuable leverage with which to question leaders. The governors know that the school's systems for managing teachers' performance are robust. Governors understand that receiving a pay rise is linked to meeting performance targets. They know that leaders support any teachers in danger of underperforming. However, if necessary, governors will withhold a pay increase where targets are not met. They are also keen to reward exceptional performance and have developed a range of ways of doing so. They know that these systems are effective and contribute successfully to raising the quality of teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are exceptionally polite and go out of their way to help each other and visitors to the school. They were always on hand to show inspectors their way around, opening doors and enquiring if there was anything they could do to assist. Pupils and staff state that this is what behaviour is always like and most parents support this view.
- Attitudes to learning are positive in lessons and in books. This can be seen by how regularly pupils respond to comments teachers make when marking. Pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and take this into consideration during lessons.
- Pupils follow instructions well. They waste no time in transitioning from one lesson to the next and in preparing the resources they need for learning.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because, occasionally, when pupils finish work quickly, they do not move on quickly to another activity. This is partly because teachers and leaders have not established secure routines to enable pupils to be clear what they should do next. However, sometimes, pupils know that there are options in terms of activities to move on to but do not choose to do so in a timely manner.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Policies are regularly updated and staff receive frequent, comprehensive training on how to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils say they feel safe, and the overwhelming majority of parents agree. Pupils learn how to stay safe outside the school environment too. For example, they learn about how to use the internet safely. They have even been taught how to perform resuscitation.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and are adamant that it does not happen in school. They know that it is persistent and can involve physical harm or the threat of it as well as name-calling. They also understand that you can use mobile devices and the internet to bully people. They are less confident in identifying more subtle forms of bullying, such as ostracising someone or the significance of spreading rumours.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured that pupils of all ages know exactly what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers regularly highlight strong features of pupils' work so that, when asked, pupils are very clear what they are good at.
- Teachers also make helpful suggestions when marking pupils' work. Pupils respond positively to these suggestions and this clearly improves their work. For example, after being prompted to find some alternatives for 'nice', pupils were able to use much more descriptive adjectives such as 'awesome' and 'elegant'.
- Teachers make ambitious demands of pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics lessons. Consequently, once pupils have been taught a new concept, they are able to apply it in a range of different contexts. Teachers impart strong subject knowledge in a clear and accessible way to help pupils learn well in lessons.
- Pupils develop strong phonics skills because teaching is precise and well matched to their needs. This underpins their confidence in reading increasingly complex texts as they move through the school. Pupils can clearly articulate what skills they use when reading, and know how to choose books that present them with a challenge. They particularly appreciate how reading the right book augments their vocabulary.
- Teachers use highly technical vocabulary in lessons and expect pupils to refer to it correctly in their own

work. This is often illustrated by something visual or concrete so that pupils fully understand what words mean. For example, in a science lesson on the digestive system, pupils crushed up food and pushed it down a tube into a plastic container of 'digestive juices'. This enabled them to understand the work of the oesophagus and how food is broken down in the stomach. They were then able to write about this in a detailed way by using the correct scientific terms.

- Teachers' use of the 'hook' often successfully develops pupils' lyrical and adventurous vocabulary in writing. This was seen in a writing lesson observed during the inspection where pupils had each been given a feather to describe. These had been carefully selected for their intricate patterns. The teacher supported pupils well to develop inventive and poetic descriptions, often using advanced language features such as similes. Pupils were highly engaged in their work because the feathers intrigued them.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and plan challenging work that requires pupils to think and reason. This really benefits the most able who rise to the challenge by producing work of a very high calibre.
- However, tasks are sometimes too difficult for pupils from lower starting points to cope with. Occasionally, some of them are not able to access the work they are given and this slows their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well and reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above average by the end of Year 6. The rate of progress pupils make across Key Stage 2 has increased notably since the previous inspection. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children make good progress.
- The most able make good progress because teachers plan tasks that really stretch them. For example, in mathematics lessons, they are often expected to solve complex problems and work together well to do so, discussing their ideas and refining their thoughts as they go. This is confirmed as the norm by the high quality of work they have completed in their books over the course of this year. The proportion of pupils reaching the very highest levels is rising year on year.
- Disadvantaged pupils did extremely well in tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014, progressing well from their differing starting points. In mathematics, they were approximately half a term ahead of their classmates and nearly a term ahead of other pupils nationally. In reading, they were half a term ahead of others in school and less than half a term below others nationally. There was a slightly wider gap in writing, where they were a term behind other pupils in school and just under half a term behind others nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because teaching assistants support them effectively in class. Leaders also meet teachers regularly to check pupils' achievement so that they can provide any additional teaching needed to fill gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills.
- Numbers of pupils from different ethnic groups in each class are often small. However, because leaders and teachers meet regularly to discuss the progress of individual pupils, they ensure that pupils from all groups achieve equally well.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, including those at an early stage of learning English, make particularly good progress in their language skills. This is because of the many opportunities they are given to develop interesting and appropriate vocabulary in a range of subjects.

The early years provision

is good

- Children get off to a good start in Reception because leaders quickly establish what they can do and plan activities that move their learning on. This means children make good progress and develop strong skills so that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- The school provides opportunities for children and their parents to get to know staff and the setting as part of their admission procedures. The process starts from before they even join the school and parents appreciate how well it helps their children settle.
- Teaching is good because teachers ensure that activities in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments meet children's needs. Teachers and teaching assistants then interact effectively with children to ensure they make the most of the opportunities on offer. Staff make careful observations of what children can do which helps them plan next steps. These processes help to build children's skills and abilities well.
- Leaders ensure that all safeguarding protocols are robust and that all staff understand what to do to keep children safe.

- Part of the success of the work the school does to ensure children are kept safe is to teach them how to take calculated risks. A good example of this was a physical education lesson where children were using apparatus. Staff were vigilant in supporting children to use new pieces of apparatus and provided ongoing commentary to ensure they did so safely. Consequently, children’s enjoyment was palpable and they made great strides in the development of their gymnastic skills.
- Children behave well. They show good manners, and are beginning to learn to resolve differences amicably without adult support. They show high levels of interest in their learning and can sustain concentration for increasing periods.
- Leadership of early years is good. Leaders have used the support from the local authority well to develop the skills needed to check the quality of teaching accurately. This is beginning to ensure that standards are equally high across all classes. These developments are very recent, and the early years provision has not yet secured outstanding outcomes for all children.

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	123034
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	462387

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	495
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Evans
Headteacher	Anne Stopforth
Date of previous school inspection	2–3 May 2013
Telephone number	01844213100
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