

Burghfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Theale Road, Burghfield Village, Reading, RG30 3TX

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Teaching is good and much is outstanding, especially in the younger and older classes. As a result, pupils get off to a great start in their education and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils who have been in the school from the Reception class attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Good support is provided for pupils who transfer to the school in other classes and they make good progress as a result.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons which meet the wide-ranging needs and interests of all the pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent and their attendance is better than in most schools. This is because they feel safe, valued and thoroughly enjoy their learning.
- Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to show how responsible they are, so the school works well as a close and supportive community and is highly regarded by parents.
- The governors and headteacher provide very effective leadership. This is ensuring improvement in teaching and pupils' learning, in spite of the challenges of running a successful school during a time of upheaval resulting from major building work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teaching in Years 3 and 4 is not as good as in the rest of the school, so here pupils' progress is slower.
- Teachers do not always mark pupils' books the way the school's marking policy tells them to.

Information about this inspection

- The school was notified about the inspection the day before it started.
- Inspectors saw teaching in every class. They observed 14 lessons, taught by six teachers. Some lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work. They heard pupils read and scrutinised their work in exercise books and on classroom wall displays.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including; plans for what pupils learn in each subject, plans for the school's future development, the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, pupils' attendance records, records of how pupils' progress and attainment is checked and tracked and records of how the school checks on the quality of teaching.
- The views of parents were taken into account through the scrutiny of the 38 responses to the on-line parent view survey and a discussion with a representative group of parents.
- Staff views were taken into consideration by looking at questionnaires completed by 13 staff members.

Inspection team

Chris Nye, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sonja Joseph

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average primary school which serves Burghfield and surrounding villages. Pupil numbers have increased recently.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Reception class. There are single aged classes in Key Stage 1, but in Key Stage 2 each of the three classes has pupils from two year groups.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and the progress that they make.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by 'school action' and those who need extra help (supported by 'school action plus', or a statement) are similar to other schools. Their difficulties are wide-ranging and include autism, hearing and visual impairment, specific learning difficulties and behaviour, emotional or social difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for additional government funding, known as the 'Pupil Premium', is above the national average. Almost all of this group are children who have a parent serving in the armed forces, and largely accounts for the above average proportion of pupils who leave before the end of Key Stage 2 or who start at the school in year groups other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- During the inspection the school was undergoing major re-building work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share existing good practice so that the quality of teaching improves still further, especially in Years 3 and 4, by:
 - ensuring that the pace of teaching improves so that pupils consistently make good or better progress in lessons
 - ensuring that the school's marking policy is consistently applied.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children do exceptionally well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They start school with skills that are at, or slightly above, those expected for their age. They make outstanding progress and almost all attain well above expected levels in all their areas of learning by the time they move into Year 1. They do especially well in their social development, reading, writing and understanding of numbers, counting and calculation.
- This excellent start is maintained throughout Key Stage 1 and pupils continue to make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Their attainment at the end of Year 2 is consistently well above that found nationally. In the recent national test in phonics (linking letters with the sounds that they make) Year 1 pupils attained results that were well above average.
- At the start of Key Stage 2 pupils' progress is slower than elsewhere in the school. Firm action is being taken to address this, but interventions are at an early stage and it is too soon to judge their impact on pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the older Key Stage 2 classes, progress accelerates and most pupils who started school in the Reception class attain standards in reading, writing and at the end of Year 6 that are well above that found nationally. Overall, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average because the pupils who start school in older year groups do not always attain as highly in reading, writing and mathematics. They have had less time in the school to achieve this. However, because their needs are accurately identified as soon as they arrive and well-matched support is provided to help those that need it to catch up, they make good progress relative to their starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. This is because they are particularly well supported by teaching programmes which have been well-designed and delivered to meet their individual needs. As a result, the gaps between what they and other pupils can do in reading, writing and mathematics are closing rapidly.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often and in lessons a strong emphasis is placed on developing reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy skills across all the subjects that they study. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Parents and pupils express very positive views about learning and progress across the school. Pupils speak with confidence and pride about the progress that they make because they are actively encouraged to assess their own and others learning. Their work is very well presented, although not enough pupils who are confident in writing with a joined-up style are encouraged to use a pen.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching in all subjects, including English and mathematics, is good. Some teaching, especially in the Reception class, Key Stage 1 and in older Key Stage 2 classes is outstanding. This is the main reason for the exceptional progress and high standards that pupils achieve at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and the improving standards in Key Stage 2.
- Lessons are imaginative and well planned. They take good account of how well pupils learnt in previous lessons, and activities meet the wide-ranging needs of pupils. For example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, imaginatively designed activities were successfully engaging and challenging pupils with a range of abilities to use their addition and subtraction skills to solve problems.
- Pupils speak confidently about what they are learning and demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their learning. They behave well and say that they enjoy their lessons, and parents who met the inspector and those who completed the on-line parent survey also expressed high levels

of confidence in the quality of teaching.

- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils and extend their learning. Adults listen carefully to what pupils say and value their responses. When misconceptions occur, teaching is suitably adjusted to ensure that the pace of learning is maintained.
- Reading is well taught because teachers and teaching assistants have a very good understanding of how to teach phonics, value reading highly and actively encourage a love of literature. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and are challenged to use their reading and research skills, for example in homework and independent topic work.
- Teaching very effectively encourages pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- In Years 3 and 4, where teaching is less effective, the pace of learning is less challenging and pupils are not as well focused on their work. Their progress is consequently slower and they do not produce as much good quality work. The school is aware of this and is taking action to raise expectations and increase the pace of learning.
- In almost all classes assessment and marking is detailed, accurate and provides very clear guidance to pupils on how they can improve further. Pupils are well aware of their targets, for example through the use of target cards. A strength is the way in which marking challenges pupils to respond to teachers' comments and assess their own and others work. This is helping pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Where marking is less effective, although written comments are evaluative and helpful, the school's policy on the way pupils may be encouraged to assess their own work or that of others and the way that pupils' progress is recorded on target cards is not consistently applied.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are consistently polite to adults and demonstrate high levels of care towards each other. In the playground older and younger pupils play happily and sensibly together and are appreciative of the range of activities that are provided for them during break times. For example, a pupil was observed enthusiastically showing others how to play chess.
- In lessons, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards their learning are outstanding. They are enthusiastic, demonstrate a great keenness to learn and effectively support the learning of others. This has a positive impact on their achievement.
- Pupils welcome the numerous opportunities to demonstrate high levels of responsibility and become fully involved in the life of the school. For example, they organise 'celebration' assemblies, work as house captains and become involved in the school's 'Wombles' team, which is responsible for keeping the school litter-free. As a result the school operates as a highly effective and cohesive community.
- Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for. This is reflected in their attendance, which is above average. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare, but pupils have a clear understanding of all forms of bullying, including racism and cyber-bullying and know what to do if they encounter it. The school strongly encourages their well-developed sense of right and wrong.
- Parents who met an inspector and those who completed the on-line parent view survey were overwhelmingly positive about pupils' behaviour and how effectively this was managed by the school.

The leadership and management are good

- Under the strong leadership of the highly regarded headteacher, the school is successfully driving improvements in standards of teaching and learning in spite of the unavoidable disruption caused by major on-going building work. Ably assisted by the assistant headteacher,

he sets consistently high expectations that all staff are keen to aspire to. Consequently, all work as a cohesive team and the school is in a strong position to maintain its already high standards and improve them further.

- Leaders at all levels are realistic about what needs to improve and the very accurate and thorough self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is based upon rigorous monitoring of teaching and data relating to pupils' progress. This data and information from checks on teaching are used effectively to inform strategic planning because the plan identifies suitable priorities and actions and indicates how and when the success of these will be measured against outcomes for pupils.
- This sort of monitoring data is also used well to hold teachers to account, inform their performance management targets and identify their training or support needs. The school keeps a close check on the impact of such support on improving pupils' achievement. For example, weaknesses identified in some teaching are being supported by subject leaders and closely monitored by the headteacher. Although it is too soon to judge the impact of this, early indications are promising.
- The subjects that pupils study are wide-ranging and outstandingly well planned. Teachers carefully build in opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects and include activities which motivate pupils and enrich their learning. The focus on problem solving means that lessons are relevant to the everyday lives of pupils. Sport and music are particular strengths and, as a result, the subjects that pupils learn effectively enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school works exceptionally well with parents and the local community. For example, it provides excellent guidance to parents on how they can support their child's learning, through parents' events and the publication of well-designed booklets which explain the school's approach towards teaching literacy and numeracy. This helps to ensure a consistent approach towards developing pupils' skills.
- The local authority appropriately provides light touch monitoring and support. This is because it recognises that the school has the capacity to build successfully upon its existing strengths.
- All safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. They are securely in place and rigorously applied. Leaders at all levels effectively promote equality of opportunity and are proactive in tackling all forms of discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is good. The Chair of the Governing Body provides effective leadership because he knows the school well and has established a strong working relationship with leaders at all levels. Governors are well trained and have a good understanding of how to use a range of data to question and challenge leaders, and so hold them effectively to account. They are kept well informed about the quality of teaching, performance management systems and salary progression. They are fully involved in judgements concerning staff promotion issues and monitor closely the effective management of financial resources. For example, following a detailed report on the pupil premium allocation, they approved funding for a family support worker and extra tuition for pupils who have a parent serving in the armed forces and who are underachieving. The governors have set suitable performance targets for the headteacher which link clearly to the school's drive to improve standards.

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	109956
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	403100

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Thompson
Headteacher	Antony Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2008
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