

Fulmer Infant School

Alderbourne Lane, Fulmer, Berkshire, SL3 6JB

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher, governors and other leaders are very passionate about the school. They work together extremely well. This has ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement are constantly of a high standard.
- Leaders and managers are very successful in making sure that the school is friendly and welcoming. This has a very positive impact on how well members of staff work and pupils learn.
- The governing body is highly effective in supporting and challenging school leaders. As a result, the school is continuing to improve.
- Parents are very positive about the school and are especially pleased with the way their children are nurtured.
- Pupils' excellent opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpin their outstanding learning. They appreciate the value of differing beliefs and are keen to celebrate each other's successes.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are very polite and exceptionally enthusiastic about their work.
- Pupils feel extremely safe at school because members of staff provide a high standard of care. They teach them about safety and how to stay safe.
- Outstanding teaching across the school inspires the pupils to want to learn and do well.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Their attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Pupils of all abilities make sustained and substantial progress.
- Sensitive support, matched closely to the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, helps them to learn exceptionally quickly.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are given work that is purposeful and relevant to their interests and needs. As a result, they make very rapid progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons, of which six were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils and members of the governing body. A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took into account the 54 responses to the online survey, Parent View, and a letter from a parent, and held informal discussions with a sample of parents.
- The inspector considered the views expressed in the survey responses from nine members of staff.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Fulmer Infant School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- There is one full-time Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic heritages, with the large majority being White British. There are only a few pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority, is well below average at one in 13 pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average at one in 70 pupils. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average at one in 20 pupils.
- There has been a change in teaching staff since the previous inspection and the headteacher joined the school in September 2011.
- A new hall is being built in the school grounds and the building work is limiting the playground space for the pupils this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers make sure that pupils always check their work and correct any mistakes in spelling and number work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides an exceptionally strong drive and sense of direction for the work of the school and has brought in many successful initiatives since the previous inspection. Other leaders, including governors, are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and aims for the future. This has been successful in securing improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, are very effective and have a very thorough understanding of how good the school is through their meticulous checking up on teaching and learning. All staff are given very clear guidance so that they are constantly honing their skills. The positive impact of training and staff development has led to teaching moving from good to outstanding since the previous inspection.
- Members of staff foster excellent relations with the pupils and each other. All pupils have the same excellent opportunities to succeed, and discrimination of any kind is successfully discouraged. Leaders have been successful in promoting excellent attendance and consequently this has risen to above average this year.
- The very few pupils who are eligible for additional funding receive the right level of help so that they usually do at least as well, if not better than, other pupils at the school and nationally.
- The special funding to improve physical education and sport is being used well to extend provision and to train members of staff. While there has been an increase in pupils' interest in the subject, the building work has made some activities difficult this term.
- There are clear plans to show what needs to be taught in various subjects over the year (the curriculum). The curriculum is rich and varied and provides valuable and meaningful experiences for the pupils, preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- The school is working with other schools in the area to draw up plans for changing the way that they keep a check on how well the pupils are doing now that the new subject planning is in place. The school already works with other schools and with the local authority to make sure that they are judging pupils' attainment and progress fairly.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Members of staff are fully trained in child safety and are checked for suitability for working in school. This is very effective.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength of the school. Clear messages about good values are taught in lessons and assemblies. For example, in one assembly, pupils learned to identify and respect signs and symbols used by various faiths.
- The local authority provides the right light-touch support for this outstanding school.
- Parents are extremely positive about the school and typically make comments such as, 'I'm delighted with the school' and, 'Children make great progress'.
- Leaders have brought in new checklists so that pupils can take more responsibility for correcting their own work. However, these are being trialled and are not yet in use across the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective because governors have a very thorough understanding of the school's strengths and next steps. They know how achievement at the the school compares with that in others, that teaching is now outstanding and how improvements in teaching are being rewarded. There is no weak teaching at the school but governors are aware of the strategies that are in place to support and challenge teachers in their work. Governors provide excellent challenge and support in equal measures.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very polite and friendly. They respect one another and adults. They thoroughly enjoy learning and consequently concentrate very well. The issue with pupils not always listening well in lessons has been tackled successfully since the previous inspection. Pupils are now avid listeners and they try their best in lessons.
- Pupils gain confidence in speaking and listening because they are given very good role models and excellent support. For example, in religious education in Year 1, the headteacher helped pupils to discuss what made them happy and was a very good role model for politeness and the correct use of grammar.

- Parents are very positive about behaviour in the school and pupils agree that behaviour is nearly always impeccable. Pupils typically say that they only occasionally 'fall out' with their friends.
- Pupils work together well in lessons. For example, in a Year 2 science lesson they helped each other to decide which objects changed under force. Pupils say that they enjoy working hard and typically make comments such as, 'I want all our learning to be challenging for us' and, 'It's fun to learn.'
- Rates of attendance have risen sharply to above average this year. Leaders have higher expectations for attendance than in the past.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility in and outside school. For example, the school council helps to support a school in Honduras and pupils recently dressed up as bananas to promote fair-trade products in a local supermarket.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils have very good knowledge about how to stay safe, including when using the internet, during the building work at the school and when near fires and fireworks. Pupils made their own safety lists for bonfire night with rules such as, 'Always lay a sparkler in water after it is finished.'
- Members of staff ensure that pupils feel very safe and are kept safe. For example, extra care has been taken to make sure that pupils are protected from the building work on site.
- The school's records show that there are very few instances of bad or unkind behaviour of any kind at the school and when these occur they are dealt with straight away and effectively. There are no recorded instances of racist or homophobic name calling and staff and pupils spoken to are not aware of having heard any.
- Pupils know that there are various types of bullying but incidents at the school are extremely rare. Pupils know what to do if they have any concerns and say that 'you can always rely on a teacher'.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is highly effective in all year groups, including in literacy, reading and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants motivate the pupils to want to learn and achieve. They plan exciting work that moves learning forward very quickly across a range of interesting topics. For example, in Year 1, pupils were very excited about their imaginative writing about the 'enchanted door' in the classroom because they wanted it to be opened to reveal its secrets.
- Teachers are excellent role models for considerate behaviour and have very high expectations. As a result pupils behave impeccably and support each other very well in their learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils discussed a picture depicting life in the war trenches with great sensitivity and consideration.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported very well in class and when being helped on a one-to-one basis. A close check is kept on their progress so that help can be targeted at the areas of greatest need.
- Excellent questioning is used to check up on what pupils know and understand and to adjust work accordingly. Consequently, very little time is wasted in lessons because pupils, including the most able, are given tasks that will move them on to the next step of learning. Marking is used very well to show pupils how to improve next time and pupils agree that their work is improving.
- Teachers provide pupils with useful checklists so that they can be more responsible for their learning, but do not always make sure that pupils take the time to check their work and correct mistakes.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. When pupils join Year 1, the majority are working beyond the levels expected for their age.
- There is some variation in attainment on entry to the school between year groups, although in all years, pupils achieve exceptionally well from their differing starting points. As a result, attainment is consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- A higher proportion of pupils reach the standard required in the Year 1 phonics (sounds and letters) screening check than nationally. They use their knowledge of phonics, along with a love of books, to help them to excel in reading. Pupils read frequently and with clear expression and enjoyment. They are pleased to talk about what they have read and know what to do if they come across an unfamiliar word.

- Pupils make substantial progress and learn exceptionally well during their time at the school. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well to support their learning in other subjects. For example, in history in Year 2, pupils wrote sensitive letters home from the view point of First World War soldiers. In science, they used charts to show their findings from testing the properties of various materials.
- The very small proportion of pupils eligible for additional funding are given individual support according to their particular strengths and needs. They almost all do as well as, if not better than, other pupils in the school and nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given exceptional support, enabling them to achieve very well. Highly trained staff check up on gaps in their learning and make sure that one-to-one help, in addition to work in class, moves their learning forward very quickly.
- The most able pupils are challenged effectively in most lessons, enabling them to extend their learning. For example, in science, one pupil described glass as being 'durable' and 'transparent'. In addition, they receive additional opportunities such as specialist teaching in mathematics. In these lessons, they develop their mental mathematics extensively and strengthen their ability to carry out mathematical investigations.
- Pupils are keen to take part in physical education lessons and play energetically at playtimes. They know that 'exercise helps our muscles and makes us flexible'. These activities support them in reaching the levels of physical performance of which they are capable.
- Although pupils do very well in writing and mathematics and have excellent attitudes towards learning, they are not always rigorous enough in checking and correcting their mistakes in spelling and number work.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The large majority of children have skills and knowledge that are typical for their age when they join school in the Reception Year. Children make exceptional progress across all areas of learning so that they are thoroughly prepared for the next stage of their education.
- There is a very good focus on reading and developing the children's knowledge of the sounds that letters make.
- Disabled children and those with special educational needs are given sensitive support so that they can take a full part in all activities. For example, during whole-class discussions, care is taken to make sure that there are questions that these children can answer, and adults help them to learn about taking turns.
- Excellent teaching ensures that children are keen to take part in all activities and learn very rapidly. Very good use is made of probing questioning and new vocabulary is given a high profile. For example, when discussing the behaviour of an owl, family words such as 'fluffy' and 'wing span' were explained.
- The children's personal development is nurtured very well. Consequently, children feel very safe and valued and are kept safe. Children demonstrate how well they understand about relationships when they make thoughtful comments about the feelings of the baby owls such as, 'They're worried because their mum might become lost for ever.'
- Children's behaviour is outstanding because there are very high expectations shared in a humorous way.
- Very little time is lost in lessons and every opportunity is taken for incidental learning, such as discussing the comparative size of the owls when telling a story.
- Excellent leadership and management ensure that the children's learning is checked frequently and thoroughly so that gaps in learning can be filled. Leaders check to make sure that their judgements about how well the children are doing are accurate and match judgements made by other schools in the area.

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	110227
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	448735

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	68
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Kirby
Headteacher	Cathy Hunt
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 May 2010
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