

Stanford in the Vale CofE Primary School

High Street, Stanford in the Vale, Faringdon, SN7 8LH

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2013

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is typically good and occasionally outstanding. Senior leaders make their expectations clear and model best practice.
- Teachers give pupils work based on interesting topics, which pupils have helped to choose. Marking is a strength of teaching.
- Pupils enjoy learning and make good progress. In some lessons, and particularly in reading, their progress is rapid.
- Progress in writing is not always as rapid as in reading, but recent strategies to improve how pupils are taught to write are proving very effective and progress has accelerated.
- Pupils achieve well. As a result of their good progress, they reach standards which are above average, particularly in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Behaviour around school is exemplary.
- Pupils are well informed about how to keep themselves safe, and quickly respond to any reminders about what is expected of them.
- The use of data has improved so that teachers know exactly how well each pupil is doing and what they need to do next. This helps teachers to plan carefully the next steps for pupils.
- Senior leaders have considered carefully how adults are used around the school to make sure that pupils get the support they need.
- Senior leaders, including governors, have made sure that the good quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Targets set for pupils are not always ambitious enough, particularly for the most able pupils and in writing.
- More-able pupils are not always confident what work would look like at the very highest levels and opportunities to do such work are not frequent enough.
- Occasionally, teachers focus too much on what pupils should do, and that tasks are finished, rather than what pupils should learn.
- Pupils are not always determined enough to decide what they need to do next. At times, they rely too much on teachers for direction.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nine teachers delivering 14 lessons or parts of lessons, as well as small groups of pupils supported by teaching assistants. Some of these observations were made together with the headteacher.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, teachers who lead particular aspects of learning, groups of pupils and with representatives of the governing body. They spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed the school’s documents, including policies and procedures for keeping pupils safe, records about how well pupils are doing, checks on the quality of teaching and learning, and the school’s self-evaluation about how effectively key issues have been tackled.
- Inspectors also spoke informally to pupils during break times, to parents and carers before school, and considered parents’ and carers’ views expressed through the 35 responses to the online survey for Ofsted, Parent View.

Inspection team

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Christine Pollitt

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average primary school, with one class for each year group.
- A new headteacher was appointed shortly after the previous inspection. There have been other changes to staffing since then.
- Almost all pupils are White British. A very few pupils are from a few other ethnic heritages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding available to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority, and children of parents of service families.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure all groups of pupils know what they are expected to learn to be successful in each lesson
 - giving pupils more opportunities to be independent in their learning, as happens in the very best lessons.
- Make sure that all groups of pupils make as rapid progress in their writing as they do in their reading, by:
 - setting even higher goals for pupils so that they know what they need to achieve in each lesson
 - giving more-able pupils a clear indication of what work would look like at the very highest levels, and more time to do such work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From their starting points, pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. Progress in writing has been increasing because of new approaches to teaching that have been introduced across the school.
- Pupils' attainment has remained above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. Work in their books and teachers' records of how well they are doing show that almost all pupils reach the levels they should for their age, and more pupils than usual exceed these levels in reading and mathematics. Pupils particularly enjoy reading for a wide range of purposes across the school. Together with their good progress, this success means their achievement is good.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are very keen to learn because of the interesting resources that are available for them, both inside and outdoors, and because the adults know their needs very well. Parents and carers say that their children love coming to school.
- The goals that are set for pupils to achieve in their writing are used to make sure their work across different topics and subjects is of a similar quality. It helps that they do most of their writing for all their subjects in one book, so they know what teachers expect, whatever subject they are writing about. However, these targets are not always as high as they are capable of reaching.
- Mathematics has been a focus in recent years and pupils develop great confidence in using these skills in a wide range of different scenarios. Pupils who are particularly gifted in mathematics get occasional opportunities to stretch themselves, for example by doing mathematics challenges.
- Some of the more able pupils are aware that they should be able to reach the highest levels in their work, but they are not always sure what they need to do to go beyond their current levels. In the best lessons, they get time to work at challenging levels well beyond those typical for their age, but this is not frequent enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported in lessons because the teaching assistants and senior leaders analyse where there are gaps in pupils' learning. The strategies used to help them are considered carefully to check that they are effective. This helps make sure these pupils make good progress in their work and develop their confidence.
- Senior leaders and the governing body keep careful track of how they spend the money allocated for the pupil premium. As a result of this support, these pupils make good progress and their attainment in English and mathematics, as measured by average points scores, shows that they are catching up with other pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is good because teachers give pupils interesting work to do which is just hard enough for them. Learning typically moves along at a good pace because teachers keep their explanations short and quickly get the pupils onto doing their work. The teaching of reading has been improved further, making sure that younger pupils are very confident in linking sounds and letters (phonics).
- Occasionally teaching is outstanding, where pupils have lots of opportunities to decide for themselves what they should do next. For example, in an outstanding lesson, some Year 5 pupils decided to work with more decimal places in order to get their answer even more accurate. In doing so, they discovered an idea new to them, of recurring decimals. However, such opportunities are not yet frequent enough.
- Very occasionally, teaching requires improvement when teachers are more focused on making sure pupils finish a particular task rather than checking they are learning and making progress. In these lessons, pupils are not always clear what it is they should be learning or how they will know if they have done so. Support from senior leaders makes sure such teaching is increasingly rare.

- During the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers record good evidence of the progress pupils are making, and pupils and parents and carers enjoy sharing this success when they look at the books or make contributions to the children's own books of work they have done.
- There has been a focus on making sure that marking of books and feedback to the pupils about their work are effective. All the teachers use the same approach, using a colour code which is also used by pupils, when they reflect on how well they have understood their learning. The helpful comments teachers write, and the responses pupils now typically make, develop a written conversation that helps pupils to make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are well informed and support pupils well, while encouraging them to do work for themselves.
- The needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are closely identified and suitable support is put in place quickly. The effectiveness of this support is now checked more quickly so that changes can be made if necessary. Teachers keep careful note of any pupils who need particular support, whatever their needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Around the school, pupils are very polite to adults and kind to each other. Their behaviour is exemplary. During lessons, their attitudes to learning are good and they willingly get on with the work they are given to do. They like helping to decide on the questions they want to look at when choosing the topics they study.
- When they get the chance to work together, pupils readily help each other and they are good at giving each other feedback about their work, which helps them know how much progress they have made.
- At times, a few pupils are too satisfied with simply doing what they are asked and are not keen to stretch themselves. This means that they sometimes complete lots of questions of the same difficulty rather than expecting to go onto harder work as soon as they are confident with a particular skill.
- Pupils feel safe at school because they know the adults care a great deal about them and do lots of things to make sure they are kept safe. They are well aware of how they can help to keep themselves safe, for example when cycling on the roads. Pupils are well trained to know how to prevent accidents and how to respond when they do occur.
- With lots of opportunities to get involved in clubs, to take on responsibilities and to contribute to the community around them, pupils develop great confidence and feel they play an important part in their school. They particularly like running some of the clubs themselves.
- Parents and carers agreed unanimously that their children enjoy school. As a result the attendance of pupils is well above average.
- Pupils understand different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying, but they say that bullying of any kind does not happen. They acknowledge that some pupils fall out occasionally, 'usually over silly things', but they added that these situations are quickly sorted out, because they do their best to live up to the values of the school. They are keen to involve everyone in games and activities.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast or after-school club enjoy using the resources available and say that it gives them a good start to their day. Parents and carers appreciate having this support for families.

The leadership and management are good

- Since arriving at the school, the headteacher has developed a strong team of leaders who help to identify key issues, find ways of tackling these and keep track of how effective this is proving. She has made sure that inadequate teaching has been eliminated.
- Teachers have been trained to help evaluate the information they collect about how well pupils

are doing and they use this insight to help them plan work which meets the needs of the pupils. The data about how well pupils are doing are now more accurate.

- Senior leaders regularly check that teachers are using the strategies that have been discussed and agreed, and that teaching is effective, through the lessons they observe, discussions with teachers and by checking the work in pupils' books. On-going reflection and carefully selected training mean that teaching continues to improve.
- The headteacher and other leaders are ambitious for the school and they have carefully planned how to continue improvements. A notable example has been their development of the topics pupils study through different subjects. This curriculum gives pupils a wide range of interesting experiences, such as their trip to London to investigate events in history and the opportunity to work with authors to develop their writing.
- Alongside the Christian festivals they celebrate, the school also looks at the festivals of other religions, and pupils develop an appreciation of wider beliefs. The reflection area in each classroom gives pupils good opportunities for thinking about themselves, their learning and the world around them. This makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils work with the school to promote equality of opportunity and make sure there is no discrimination. The older pupils take on roles as 'buddies' or 'play-leaders' which give them the chance to help make sure pupils from different backgrounds get along well.
- Opportunities to experience a wide variety of music, theatre, dance and sports, as well as thinking about moral issues, mean that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is well supported.
- The additional funding available for eligible pupils, the pupil premium, is used to provide these pupils with additional support in developing their confidence, particularly in English, mathematics and speech and language, and to provide access to opportunities including the residential trips. This helps to make sure these pupils make good progress.
- The local authority has viewed the school as requiring only the minimum of support. At the invitation of the school, it has helped to make sure activities to check the quality of teaching are accurate. Earlier support has ensured that mathematics has become a strength of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an accurate view about the work of the school because they spend time gathering first-hand information. Along with their training, for example about understanding the data available, this enables them to ask challenging questions. They check that issues are identified quickly and improvements brought about. Together with senior leaders, they make sure that all statutory requirements are met and that adults at the school understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. They take part in some of the training for teachers, and support the headteacher in making clear their vision for improving learning further. They keep a close check on how finances are spent, including making sure that the level of teachers' pay reflects the quality of their teaching. They also evaluate how well the additional funding, the pupil premium, benefits those who are eligible.

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	123159
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	403514
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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Warren
Headteacher	Amanda Willis
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 March 2008
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