

Scott Lower School

Hawk Drive,, Bedford, MK41 7JA

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Measures taken to raise standards since the previous inspection have successfully improved pupils' achievement across the school, especially in Years 3 and 4.
- By the end of Year 2, standards are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics because of pupils' good progress in all subjects. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also make good progress.
- Teaching is good. All staff work successfully with senior leaders to raise achievement for all groups of pupils, including those who have particular social and emotional difficulties.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe and are proud of their school.
- The headteacher, well supported by staff and governors, has addressed the issues from the previous inspection effectively and brought about rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and standards of achievement.
- Members of the governing body carry out their responsibilities effectively. They provide good support to leaders and are confident in holding the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as rapid as in English because teachers do not consistently provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils or match activities closely enough to their attainment level.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills through other subjects.
- Teachers do not always use questioning effectively enough to deepen pupils' skills and understanding in all subjects.
- Sometimes, spending too long in the carpet area means that pupils do not have enough time to do their own work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons, two of which were seen together with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made shorter visits to lessons to focus on specific aspects such as the effectiveness of support for pupils who have special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium. The inspectors also listened to groups of pupils in Years 2 and 4 reading.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and a local authority representative. The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A member of the inspection team held a meeting with a group of pupils from Key stages 1 and 2.
- Inspectors took account of 43 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View. They also analysed 20 questionnaire returns from staff.
- The inspection team looked at a range of documentation, including information on pupils' performance, the school's own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and records and documents relating to the targets set for teachers to improve their work.

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools, even though the number of pupils has increased since September this year.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and a higher than average proportion of pupils comes from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few are at the early stages of speaking English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion receiving support at school action plus and who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school is in the process of becoming a two-form entry school and has started with an additional Reception class this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up pupils' progress in mathematics, in order to match their more rapid progress in reading and writing, by:
 - ensuring that tasks consistently provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils
 - making opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding, by:
 - questioning pupils more effectively to deepen their skills and understanding in all subjects
 - providing short and sharp introductions to lessons so that pupils have enough time to work on their tasks and consolidate their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are below the levels expected for their age, particularly in language and numeracy. They make good progress because staff have a good understanding of children's needs and plan exciting learning experiences, well matched to their abilities.
- Standards have improved over the past two years, especially in Years 3 and 4. In 2012 and 2013, pupils have achieved standards that are above the national average by the end of Year 2. The proportion of pupils exceeding the expected levels in reading and writing and mathematics is also above average.
- School assessment data and the work seen in their books and lessons, show that pupils make good progress in Years 3 and 4 and attainment by the end of Year 4 was above those expected at this stage. Progress in reading and writing has been faster than in mathematics because of the concerted actions taken by the school to raise pupils' achievement in reading and writing. The results of the Year 1 screening check on phonics (the sounds that letters make) were significantly above average in 2012 and 2013.
- Pupils develop good reading skills. Older pupils read fluently and confidently from a wide range of books and are keen to discuss their favourite characters making reference to the texts. Younger pupils apply their knowledge of phonics well to read unfamiliar words because of the systematic and effective teaching of phonics. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 read with confidence and are keen to discuss whether their chosen books are fiction or non-fiction.
- There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls or different ethnic groups. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress and achieve standards comparable to that of their classmates.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with specific social and emotional needs, are nurtured very well and they make good progress in their learning. This is because they are given extensive support in lessons and through carefully planned intervention programmes by teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff.
- The funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used well to support pupils by additional support staff and through a range of intervention sessions for individual pupils. As a result, these pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and the gap in attainment is narrowing across the school. However, the gap in Year 4 has widened from two terms in 2012 to three terms in 2013. This gap is due to the lower prior attainment of this particular group, although their progress is good. In Year 2 in 2012, pupils were on average about three terms behind their classmates. Because the support has been effective, the gap in attainment has narrowed in 2013. They are now one term behind the others.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved because school leaders have supported staff to provide a good education for their pupils. Staff create a positive and purposeful learning environment, and relationships across the school are consistently good. This has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and achievement.
- Children in Reception thrive in a stimulating learning environment and are helped in pursuing

activities of their own choice as well as those directed by adults. They have good opportunities to use and apply their developing literacy and numeracy skills. For example, they enjoy reading and sharing books and are becoming confident in identifying different shapes.

- In most lessons, teachers involve pupils in their learning by asking searching questions that make them think hard as well as assessing their understanding of what they have already learnt. Nonetheless, in some lessons, the opportunity is missed to deepen pupils' skills and understanding of the topics taught through probing questioning for all groups of pupils.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They focus well on improving pupils' writing skills through a range of activities. Pupils in a Year 2 lesson, for example, were observed analysing a range of adjectives to write about a good 'pirate.' Teachers make sure that pupils read and deepen their understanding of a range of stories, analysing the impact of key events and characters. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Teachers usually plan tasks that are well matched to the learning needs of pupils, but this is not consistently so. In a few lessons, especially in mathematics, the planned work is not always closely enough matched to the attainment levels of the more-able pupils. Occasionally, teachers spend too long in the carpet area, leaving pupils insufficient time to work on their own and to consolidate their learning. This means pupils do not progress as well as they can in these lessons.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and effectively, providing a clear guidance as to how well pupils are doing and how to move forward to the next stage in their learning. They make sure that pupils respond to the guidance, correcting their work. This has sped up pupils' progress considerably.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning. This contributes well to a calm and safe environment where pupils flourish. The school is an inclusive community, welcoming all within a culture of mutual respect and pupils value this.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming both in class and around the school. They respond very well to the school's positive approach to behaviour and grow as confident learners.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said that behaviour was good, their children were kept safe and they were happy to come to school.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They have a good understanding of various types of safety issues such as internet safety, fire and road safety. They know how to keep themselves and others safe because the school includes issues about safety in lessons. Recently, pupils in Year 3 and 4 had training on how to deliver basic emergency care from an ambulance service.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare, and are confident that adults deal with them fairly and effectively. They take on responsibilities enthusiastically. Through the school council, pupils select charities each year for which they raise funds. Attendance is average and improving because of the school's rigorous monitoring system.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because pupils' engagement in learning is not

consistently high to ensure greater progress, especially when they have spent too long listening to the teacher and become distracted.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, together with other senior leaders, communicates high expectations and is successfully driving improvement. Consequently, teaching has improved and standards of achievement have risen over the past two years.
- Senior leaders make rigorous checks of pupils' progress to find out how well pupils are achieving. All staff use information on achievement well to track the progress pupils are making and make sure that they are meeting challenging targets. Well-organised intervention programmes provide extra help for those who need it to catch up with others.
- The regular management of staff performance, through checks on teaching and the progress of pupils, means that teachers receive timely opportunities for professional development. Leaders make sure that the levels of pay awarded to individual teachers reflect how well their pupils are achieving and any leadership responsibilities that they have.
- All teachers are responsible for leading one or more subjects and their role is developing well. The leadership of the Reception classes is effective in ensuring that children settle quickly and make good progress.
- A broad and well-organised curriculum provides good opportunities for many enjoyable learning experiences for all groups of pupils. Visits to places of interest and a wide range of clubs and events in school make pupils' learning exciting and meaningful. For example, pupils attended a mock graduation ceremony in a local university and had the opportunity to interview their local Member of Parliament. These activities, along with assemblies and the study of different religions, boost pupils' confidence and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school has already taken action to enhance opportunities for pupils to develop their sporting skills further through the new additional funding for sports. It is too early to assess the impact at this stage.
- The local authority has provided very effective support to the school which has helped it improve quickly within a short time. Leaders and governors worked effectively with the local authority to achieve this.
- Parents are given good support on how they can support their children's learning at home through a range of information evenings and newsletters.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because the improvements made so far have not been sustained for a long enough period to assure consistently high performance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

Governors have a good understanding of the school, how well pupils are progressing and the effectiveness of teaching. They have been fully involved in the school's action to improve achievement and teaching. They are aware of the results pupils attain in national tests and how they compare nationally. They set challenging objectives for the headteacher and understand how each member of staff is paid according to their experience and performance. Governors challenge leaders and ask searching questions about how any underperformance is tackled. Finances are well managed and funds available through the pupil premium have been used well to raise attainment of the targeted pupils. The governing body ensures that all national safeguarding requirements are fully met.

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	109512
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	425191

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

Type of school	First
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcom Redford
Headteacher	Anita Barker
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2012
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