

Penn Wood Primary and Nursery School

Penn Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL2 1PH

Inspection dates 9–10 January 2014

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.

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school, given their very low starting points, and make good progress as a result of effective and stimulating teaching.
- The progress made by pupils is continuing to accelerate as strategies to improve attainment become more embedded.
- Pupils' good behaviour in and around the school creates a very harmonious community.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know how to stay safe.
- The school makes very effective provision for those who speak English as an additional language, especially through encouraging pupils to talk through their work with adults and develop their vocabulary enabling them to take a full part in all lessons.
- Teachers' marking is very thorough and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection because of the extremely effective leadership and management of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors and their determination to raise the achievement of pupils.
- The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and uses this information particularly well to determine priorities in the school improvement plan
- Middle leaders are making a very strong contribution to improving the quality of teaching and supporting those teachers new to the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment is no more than average overall and too few of the most able pupils attain the higher levels in national assessments, particularly in reading.
- Effective strategies to raise attainment are not applied consistently across the school. The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 38 lessons or parts of lessons, including some small-group sessions, and observed 18 teachers and adults other than teachers. Some of the visits were carried out together with the headteacher or deputy headteachers.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, teachers and support staff and a discussion was held with the school's improvement consultant from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan and evaluated samples of pupils' work alongside senior staff.
- Other documents scrutinised included: curriculum plans; documents relating to attendance, safeguarding and child protection; records of pupils' attainment and progress; records of behaviour; records relating to the monitoring of teaching; and minutes of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 13 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke to over 25 parents and carers at the start of the school day and during the parent-and-child reading session. Questionnaires received from 53 staff were analysed.

Inspection team

Stephen Lake, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Rekha Bhakoo	Additional inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than most other primary schools.
- Very few pupils are White British. The majority come from the Indian sub-continent, with the largest group being those of Pakistani origin. There are increasing numbers of pupils from other European countries.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The number of pupils who either leave or join the school other than at the normal time is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion who are supported at school action plus or who have statements of special educational needs is also above average. The most significant areas of need include speech and communication difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A few pupils have physical disabilities.
- An above-average percentage of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium (funding to support children in local authority care, children of service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school shares a site with a children's centre, which is subject to a separate inspection.
- The school has been awarded Thinking School status by the University of Exeter, has a United Nations Children's Fund Rights Respecting Schools award. It has been recognised as a centre of excellence for an initiative developing systems that improve pupils' written work by focussing closely on talking in great detail as preparation for writing tasks.
- Seven newly-qualified teachers have been appointed since September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' levels of attainment, particularly in reading, so that more attain the higher levels in national assessments, by:
 - ensuring consistently high levels of challenge in lessons for the most able
 - applying the highly successful strategies for improving pupils' writing and communication skills consistently in all classes, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - extending the very effective strategies for improving reading in Year 2 across the school so that more pupils develop their understanding of what they are reading.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills and knowledge below those normally found. They make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes, although their low starting points mean that their attainment at the start of Year 1 remains below national expectations and limits their readiness for the next stage of their education a little.
- Pupils' attainment in national assessments has improved rapidly since the previous inspection and during Years 1 and 2 their progress accelerates so that many do better than expected. In the most recent Year 1 check on phonics skills (how well pupils link letters and sounds) more pupils than average attained the expected standard. The attainment of those who have been at the school from Nursery to Year 2 is close to average. However, the relatively large turnover of pupils, the high numbers who are in the early stages of learning English and the low starting points of other pupils all adversely affect national assessments, which remain below average at the end of Year 2, especially in reading. Too few of the most able pupils attain the higher Level 3 in national assessments, particularly in reading.
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress has also accelerated since the last inspection and it is now very rapid. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is average. However, too few of the most able pupils are attaining the higher Level 5 in national assessments, especially in reading. Pupils say that they enjoy reading but some lack fluency and understanding.
- Inspectors' observations showed that pupils' attainment in both key stages continues to improve, not least because of initiatives such as that where pupils talk through and act out stories before writing them down, and the 'rapid reading' initiative introduced recently in Year 2 where parents or carers come into school every week to read with their children. Pupils' achievement in mathematics has been slightly better than their achievement in English, but a similar 'rapid mathematics' weekly session is now also in place. Although it is too soon to see the full impact in national assessments, these initiatives, especially the sharp focus on talking, are providing very effective support for those pupils in the early stages of learning English.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least the same progress as other pupils due as a result of the support they receive and because of very well-targeted interventions.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils. Their attainment in recent national assessments was about four months ahead of other pupils in the school in reading and around four months behind other pupils in mathematics and writing. This gap is closing rapidly.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The considerable improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection is recognised by parents, carers, pupils and staff. No inadequate teaching was observed and inspection evidence, supported by school and external evaluations, shows much good teaching, with many examples of outstanding teaching. This is enabling the rapid improvement in achievement taking place but is not yet completely consistent throughout the school.
- Teachers work hard to stimulate and motivate pupils, making good use of information and communication technology, where suitable. For example, in a religious education lesson pupils made good progress understanding Sikhism because a video provoked good-quality discussion about what Sikhs believe and how this links to other religions.
- In an English lesson in Year 4, very good use of the school strategy for talking through stories before writing them down ensured that pupils made outstanding progress as they acted out and recounted a story that they had previously heard. Pupils altered the vocabulary used in the story and through their discussions came up with different ways of describing the movement of a

character. Where they are employed, these discussions are increasing pupils' vocabulary and encouraging them to experiment with language before committing their thoughts to paper.

- In the vast majority of lessons, teaching assistants make a valuable contribution and often work as a seamless team with the teacher. These effective partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants enable disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to receive high-quality support that enhances their learning. Although good-quality interventions take place in small groups, good support for these pupils also enables them to take a full part in lessons alongside other pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well by bilingual teaching assistants.
- Recent appointments are strengthening the teaching team but some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve.
- Teachers mark books very frequently and show pupils clearly what they need to do next, based upon their assessments of pupils. In the vast majority of lessons, clear targets are set for all pupils, who know when they have achieved them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. The school is litter free and pupils take pride in their books and their uniform. They understand the rewards and sanctions and respond well to instructions from teachers.
- Pupils are polite and courteous and take heed of the school's policy of respecting their own and others' rights. This has led to the school being given the Rights Respecting School award and is integral to the way pupils show respect to one another regardless of any differences.
- Most pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. When teaching does not fully challenge them, a small number of pupils do not concentrate well, which slows their learning a little.
- The safety of pupils is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are taught well how to stay safe. The school is a secure site where pupils feel free from harassment. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including discrimination and prejudice-based bullying. They demonstrate a strong understanding of how to avoid cyber bullying and unsafe sites on the internet and understand how to keep themselves safe in other situations. Pupils know how to recognise unacceptable or discriminatory language and say that this only occurs rarely in the form of teasing that they regard as low-level bullying. Pupils trust teachers to deal with incidents.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View, or who spoke to inspectors, agreed that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The high expectations of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors have ensured rapid and sustained improvement since the previous inspection. Their clear vision and determination to raise standards are communicated very effectively to all staff, indicating a very strong capacity to improve further.
- The quality of teaching and learning is monitored very rigorously and demanding but realistic targets for improving the achievement of pupils are set for teachers in order for them to progress along the pay scale. As one teacher said, 'We know exactly what we have to do to get a pay rise in this school.'
- Teachers say that they receive excellent professional development that is helping them improve their practice. Leaders and managers at all levels provide strong role models for newly qualified teachers and support them very effectively; most are already making a significant contribution to raising pupils' attainment. Nevertheless, not all teachers have had the opportunity to observe the

best practice of their colleagues, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

- The school has been recognised as a centre of excellence in developing systems for encouraging and enabling pupils to talk in detail about what they are going to write and improving the vocabulary used before committing their ideas to paper the school advises other schools both locally and nationally. The local authority recognises the expertise within the school that is bringing about rapid improvement and provides only light-touch support when requested. Often the request is from the local authority for the school to support others.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The high levels of debate and reflection that are encouraged across the curriculum have contributed to the award of Thinking School status.
- Safeguarding meets requirements. Training for all staff and governors is up to date and all are very aware of the way in which the circumstances of some pupils can make them very vulnerable.
- Information on the progress and attainment of pupils is analysed carefully to identify any pupils who are underachieving so that support can be provided. This helps senior leaders to ensure equality of opportunity and avoid discrimination. This excellent use of data has been recognised by the school being appointed a School Information Management System partnership school that sets an excellent example in the analysis of data.
- Links with parents and carers are very strong. Senior staff are available at the school gate before and after school and easily accessible to parents and carers who wish to speak to them. A wealth of information is provided through the school's website, some in the other languages found within the community in order to make information available to as many as possible.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body provides extremely clear direction to the work of the school. Governors are committed to raising pupils' achievement from good to outstanding. They visit the school regularly and question the school leaders about what and how well pupils are learning. External reports enable them to corroborate their own findings and ensure that they have high-quality information about the quality of teaching. Governors undertake regular training and interrogate data on school performance thoroughly. They are well aware of how this information is used to reward teachers for good performance or to indicate where professional development may be required. They ensure that the information on school performance is linked closely to the performance management of the headteacher. Governors check regularly upon the impact of specific funding such as the pupil premium. They understand how the provision paid for by the new sports grant is increasing participation in sport and promoting healthy lifestyles, and they are checking that the training for staff will sustain this.

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	130372
Local authority	Slough
Inspection number	431049

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	565
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Pearce
Headteacher	Jane Girle
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 March 2012
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