

Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School

Checkendon, Reading, Berkshire RG8 0SR

Inspection dates	7–8 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is an effective leader and manager. She has taken decisive action to improve the school following the previous inspection. Teaching is better and pupils are making more rapid progress in their learning.
- The headteacher and governors share high expectations and are determined to continue the improvement in the school's performance. Staff work as a strong team and are committed to the school's success.
- Teachers plan interesting work that engages pupils well. They check pupils' progress regularly and plan effective extra help whenever needed. Teaching assistants are skilful and contribute strongly to pupils' learning.
- Classes are managed well. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and pupils behave well. Pupils work hard and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils like learning and their teachers. Attendance is high and, as a result of the good teaching, pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils say they feel valued and safe. They try to live the school's values and look out for one another. Pupils feel part of a family. They are confident and speak well.
- In Reception, children quickly settle into classroom routines and make good progress in their development, due to good teaching in a well-managed department. They are well prepared to start in Year 1.
- The governing body provides an effective oversight of the school through a good balance of support and challenge. Governors make sure safeguarding procedures are effective.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They say they are involved and well informed and that their children are happy and making good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always use their knowledge of pupils' prior learning well enough to plan suitably challenging activities for pupils.
- Subject leaders do not have enough responsibility for improving teaching in their areas.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to improve their spelling.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership further by enabling subject leaders to take a full part in monitoring the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the quality of teaching further by making sure that teachers make effective use of information about pupils' prior learning in planning activities that will challenge different ability groups.
- Raise pupils' achievement in English further by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to master the basics of spelling.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has gained the confidence of staff, parents and pupils. Staff work closely as a team and their morale is high. Parents spoke highly of the effectiveness of the headteacher and the progress their children were making. The headteacher has high expectations and a determination that the school continues to improve. The school has made good progress in improving the areas identified in the previous inspection. For example, pupils now reach higher standards in writing and make better progress in mathematics.
- School leaders have an accurate picture of the school's performance and are implementing a well-thought-out plan to continue the school's forward momentum. Teaching and learning are the main focus for improvement. A wide range of evidence, including pupils' progress, is used to ensure an accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and its impact in a rigorous process to manage the performance of teachers and teachers' assistants. Challenging targets are set for teachers, including for improving pupils' progress, and linked to their progression along the pay scale.
- School leaders provide a good level of training to meet the identified needs of individual teachers and teaching assistants and whole-school priorities. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved. Leaders are given responsibility to raise the level of performance in their areas. At the moment, subject leaders do not have a big enough role in checking the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' progress is checked closely at regular meetings between teachers and school leaders. Accurate judgements of the quality of pupils' work are ensured by comparing the work of pupils from a group of local schools and moderation visits from the local authority. Teachers and school leaders know how well each pupil is doing. Effective additional support is provided for any pupils in danger of slipping behind.
- The curriculum is well planned, with a suitable emphasis on English and mathematics and a balance of other subjects. Topics, combining elements of several subjects and based on a high-quality text, are taught well, engaging pupils' interest and sparking their enthusiasm. Pupils discuss the areas they would like to find out more about and an overarching topic question focuses pupils' thinking. Special events or trips enhance learning well. Parents are given the opportunity to see what their children have learned through such things as performance assemblies. For example, in a Year 6 'Vikings' topic, pupils studied Viking invasions, learned about Viking art and designed Viking boats. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 visited London and the London Eye to answer the question 'What makes London such a cool place to live?'
- The school provides a good range of clubs to enrich pupils' experiences further. Sport has a particularly high profile. All pupils go swimming regularly and the primary sports fund is used effectively to provide a wide range of physical activity, from tennis to quidditch, sporting competitions and to hone teachers' coaching skills. As a consequence, more pupils are engaging in regular physical activity.
- The school actively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through lessons, assemblies and placing a high value on its 'school's values', such as respect and compassion. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures. Each week, pupils reflect on which of their classmates is most clearly showing that they are living the values. In addition, in citizenship lessons, they are learning about the qualities needed to become a responsible citizen in modern Britain. They understand the need for rules, inside school and in the wider community. They practise democracy in electing the school council.
- Staff are committed to equal opportunities and ensuring that there is no discrimination. They will not tolerate derogatory language or unkind actions, and the school uses the pupil premium effectively to enable eligible pupils to take a full part in the life of the school and to make similar progress to their peers.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the school by providing regular contact with an experienced school improvement leader and a strong training programme. The local authority recognises the improvements made at the school and that it is now good.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are pleased with the teaching and support their children receive and the progress they make. Several parents commented on how happy their children were at school, how well involved and informed they felt, and the approachability of staff.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors share the headteacher's drive and ambition for the school and are closely involved in managing her performance. They offer the school leaders strong support and clear challenge.
 - The governing body has reorganised its structure since the previous inspection and become more efficient in gathering information about the school's performance and in providing greater challenge to

school leaders. A named governor is responsible for monitoring the proposed actions for each of the priorities in the school development plan.

- In addition to the regular report from the headteacher, governors regularly conduct focused visits to see for themselves the school in action and talk to pupils and other staff. They have a good understanding of school performance information and are able to ask probing questions of leaders, holding them to account for the effectiveness of their actions. They are aware that teachers know their pupils well.
- There is a good mix of skills and experience in the governing body. Governors have enhanced their skills further with recent training, for example on the 'Prevent' duty.
- Governors ensure that the school's finances are managed prudently and to the benefit of pupils. They understand the impact of spending on the progress disadvantaged pupils make. Governors also know that the sports funding is being used effectively to improve the coaching skills of teachers and to increase the amount of sport done by pupils. They are aware of the quality of teaching and check that teachers' pay awards are warranted.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders ensure that all necessary training for staff is completed and that staff know the procedures to follow if they have any safeguarding concerns. The headteacher, as the designated safeguarding lead, has good contact with external support agencies and is tenacious in following up any issues that arise. Governors oversee health and safety and walk the site regularly. Parents rightly agree that their children are kept safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their work. They regularly praise pupils for their effort and making contributions to discussions, encouraging their active participation. Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection.
- Staff meetings and training sessions for teachers and teaching assistants focus on improving teaching and learning. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to ensure that extra support is well targeted and effective. Teaching assistants provide a valuable contribution to pupils' progress.
- Good relationships have been established between teachers and pupils. Teachers explain clearly what they expect pupils to do and usually model the expected outcome so that pupils know what is expected of them. Success criteria are provided so that pupils know what good work looks like. Questioning is used well to encourage pupils to think hard and to explain their reasoning.
- Teachers follow the school's marking policy closely. They point out what has been achieved, the next steps needed to progress further and corrections that need to be made. Often, an extension question is given to test pupils' understanding further. Pupils usually respond well to this feedback. They are given many opportunities to mark their own or a classmate's work, helping them to understand better the success criteria.
- Teachers give pupils regular opportunities to discuss their ideas in preparation for writing, helping pupils to reflect on how to express themselves. Pupils have good opportunities to write in different genres and in different subjects. Daily reading sessions help pupils develop their comprehension skills well. In mathematics, there is a strong focus on developing pupils' skills in calculation. Exercises that develop their reasoning skills are becoming more numerous. Teachers expect them to use the correct mathematical terms when giving explanations. In science, pupils have the chance to plan and carry out investigations in a range of topics, including light, forces and the circulatory system.
- Homework builds successfully on the work pupils are doing in class, for example a research activity, as well as regular exercises in the basics of reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers are familiar with the new national curriculum and apply the school's new assessment system. They plan lessons carefully to develop ideas logically and provide activities with different levels of challenge for pupils to select from. Activities provided are usually interesting and engage pupils well. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were fascinated at the recurring patterns they discovered when investigating the use of calculators to convert fractions into decimals. However, teachers do not always use information about pupils' prior learning to ensure that planned activities are challenging enough. Sometimes, a few pupils continue for too long on activities they have already mastered.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe, valued and well looked after at school. They say they can always speak to a teacher if they are upset, and know that teachers would listen to them. The site is secure and pupils are closely supervised at all times.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, they remember, from lessons on e-safety, how to use the internet. They have learned about the benefits of a balanced diet and regular exercise to stay healthy.
- Pupils get along with each other well. Cooperation and collaboration between pupils is seen across the school. For example, Year 5 'buddies' look out for Reception children, escorting them to assembly. Pupils say that the school is like a big family where everyone looks after one another.
- Pupils become self-assured and speak confidently. In a whole-school assembly, pupils were able to answer questions, speaking clearly and explaining their thoughts about the 'school values'. In class, pupils regularly join in discussions, and show interest in learning by asking questions and presenting their work well. They willingly take on roles of extra responsibility, such as school council representative, digital leader and school values ambassador.
- Pupils have learned about bullying and its different forms. They report that bullying is rare. They know that their teachers would listen to them and sort out any incidents fairly.
- Pupils enjoy learning new things, like their teachers, and they attend school regularly. Attendance figures continue to be high.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and contributes strongly to the calm, purposeful and welcoming atmosphere of the school.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They conduct themselves well as they move around the school and play sensibly during breaktimes.
- Teachers are consistent in the way they manage their groups and pupils know the behaviour expected of them. School records show there have been few examples of misbehaviour and they have been resolved appropriately by the school. Parents agree that behaviour is good and managed well.
- Pupils are usually attentive in lessons, respond promptly to teachers' instructions and settle down to work easily. They listen to one another in discussions and work harmoniously in small groups. When asked to collect and distribute materials in preparation for an activity, they do so efficiently and fairly. Occasionally, when activities go on too long, a few pupils can become restless and lose concentration.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Performance information and work seen in a sample of books across all years show that a large proportion of pupils are on track to attain age-related expectations or better in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the current year. Overall, pupils throughout the school are making good progress in their learning from their different starting points.
- In 2015, pupils also made good progress. By the end of key stage 1, pupils had attained standards similar to the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of key stage 2, all Year 6 pupils attained at least the expected standards in these subjects and more pupils than average reached the higher standards in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils learn phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) well. In Year 1, pupils build securely on the solid foundations of phonics teaching in the Reception class. Short, regular teaching sessions for groups of pupils at different stages of their learning are effective in developing pupils' ability to segment words and blend sounds. In 2015, all Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard in the national phonics check.
- The most able pupils have good opportunities to work with similar pupils from other schools, for example on poetry, geography, sports and computing projects. They often work in mixed-ability pairs in class, gaining experience of explaining the current work, and teachers' planning includes more challenging tasks for them. The most able pupils are achieving well in English and mathematics.
- The small numbers of pupils who have special educational needs or disability or who are disadvantaged are catered for well and are making similar progress to their peers. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely with the special educational needs coordinator to plan effective activities for them and check

the additional help given has the necessary impact. They are careful to involve parents and pupils themselves. Extra support in lessons or, occasionally, out of class is effective in meeting their needs. For example, sessions reading to a 'reading dog' encourage some pupils to develop their reading skills. The number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is so small that no meaningful comment can be made about the attainment gap between them and others.

- The school is effective in developing pupils' reading skills and promoting regular reading. For example, teachers have stocked classroom reading corners with high-quality texts; pupils read with a teacher at least once a week; and pupils read for pleasure each day for half an hour. Planned events further encourage reading, such as the regular arrival of a mobile library, authors like Michael Morpurgo visiting the school, and reading competitions.
- Pupils present their work well in mathematics, complete exercises and show enthusiasm for their work. They have opportunities to explain their thinking and become familiar with mathematical terms. The roll-out of a new mathematics teaching programme up to Year 4 has improved pupils' recall of number facts, such as times tables.
- Pupils are given generous opportunities to write at length in a variety of subjects. Their handwriting, clearly modelled by teachers, develops well. They increasingly use a variety of sentences and vocabulary to match genre and create atmosphere. Pupils enjoy writing and regularly edit and redraft scripts to improve their finished texts. For example, one pupil increased the clarity of a phrase by adding the word 'chaotic' to produce 'distracted by chaotic noise in the station'. Pupils' writing seen in books shows they have made good progress this year. However, although there is an increased focus on spelling, their ability in this aspect of their writing does not improve as quickly.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start Reception with the knowledge, skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. Through a series of well-planned activities, focusing on each individual child's weaker areas, children make good progress in their learning and are well prepared for moving into Year 1. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year has been higher than the national average for the past two years. School information and records of their progress seen show that nearly all children currently in Reception will also attain a good level of development. The accuracy of the school's data has been verified by the local authority.
- The Reception class is effectively led and managed. Adults know the children well before they arrive, having visited them in their pre-reception setting. They plan activities based on children's interests and learning needs. Children's achievements at school and at home and their comments are recorded regularly, in a variety of formats. Adults in Reception work closely together to share professional expertise, check how well children are learning and plan suitable opportunities for their next steps. Additional support is organised where necessary, for example in developing motor skills or speech and language. All necessary steps to keep children safe are taken.
- Children settle readily into the warm and welcoming atmosphere of the Reception class and quickly slip into the class routines. They socialise well, sharing things fairly and being quick to talk to one another about what they are doing. For example, two boys worked enthusiastically together, measuring the heights of sunflowers they had recently planted and discussing how best to use the measuring tape. Children develop self-confidence and are able to do things for themselves. They are eager to explain what they are doing and why.
- Teaching is good. Phonics is taught effectively. Children learn what the different sounds are and they can explain how to make them. Adults often engage children in conversation, improving their speaking skills and prompting them to reflect on their chosen task. Adults make good use of praise, particularly to recognise the effort and thinking children put into their work. Children have many opportunities to write, read and think about numbers. They are encouraged to write and count for interesting purposes, such as preparing a picnic basket. They usually stick to the activities they choose and show curiosity and interest.
- The learning environment, inside and out, is well organised, offering children a good range of activities to engage in, bright displays and opportunities for counting, writing and reading. Part of the environment is developed from children's ideas. For example, a large part of the interior area reflects their current interest in dinosaurs, with an appropriately decorated reading corner and a 'dinosaur den'.
- Parents speak highly of the early years department and about how well their children are doing and how happy they are. They appreciate the opportunities they have to see and contribute to the records of their children's progress and to discuss how they can help them at home.

School details

Unique reference number	123200
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10012260

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Hayes
Headteacher	Gillian Seymour
Telephone number	01491 680693
Website	www.checkendon.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.3801@checkendon.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school and serves several small village communities. It has a Reception class, which children attend full time, and three further mixed-age classes for Years 1 and 2, 3 and 4 and 5 and 6.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is around the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector, accompanied by the headteacher, observed pupils in all year groups engaged in a range of activities in different subjects. He looked at pupils' written work in all years and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other school leaders, the chair of the governing body, accompanied by four other governors, and the school's improvement leader from the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to a group of pupils and, informally, with other pupils in lessons and around the school. He listened to some pupils in Year 2 reading and spoke to them about their reading habits.
- Several school documents were examined. These included the school's evaluation of its performance and its improvement plan, notes of governors' meetings, information about pupils' progress and attainment, evidence about the quality of teaching, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.
- The inspector took account of the 49 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views expressed informally by parents as they arrived at school. The inspector also looked at the questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jim McVeigh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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