

# Buckland Church of England Primary School

Summerside, Faringdon, Oxfordshire SN7 8RB

## Inspection dates

19–20 October 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher leads by example, insisting on the highest standards in all areas of the school. Her expertise is used very well across the academy trust.
- Leaders are not complacent. They rigorously scrutinise information about pupils' progress and ensure any relative weaknesses are rapidly ironed out.
- The school has a strongly positive culture. Every pupil is given the support required to achieve as well as they can. Pupils learn confidently and enthusiastically.
- Pupils achieve highly. In 2016 tests and assessments, early information shows that the proportion achieving above the nationally set expectations in reading, writing and mathematics was much higher than average.
- Over the past three years, the strong focus on improving learning has meant that pupils in key stages 1 and 2 have achieved at a consistently high level.
- Very effective teaching, with a relentless focus on making sure each pupil is developed, nurtured and challenged has meant pupils achieve very well across a range of subjects.
- Teaching assistants generally make a strong contribution to learning. However, their practice is not equally effective in all subjects and all years.
- Assessment approaches successfully enable teachers and pupils to identify the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to achieve highly.
- The curriculum is very effectively designed, providing excellent opportunities for learning in core and foundation subjects while developing pupils' love of the arts and abilities to apply their skills to real-life contexts.
- Pupils behave, and care for each other, exceptionally well. Many have leadership roles that enable them to make a positive contribution to school life.
- The early years is very well led. Opportunities for different types of learning, including through play, are effectively planned to ensure children leave the setting ready for the challenges of key stage 1.
- Spirituality, social responsibility and a very strong code of ethics permeate the school. Pupils have a meaningful understanding of the local, national and international communities to which they belong.
- Governance is excellent. Governors meticulously ensure that pupils have all their needs fully met and no one is left behind. They champion the school because they assiduously check it is as good as it can be.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Fully implement plans for sharing strong practice so all teaching assistants are as effective as the best in the school, especially but not solely, in non-core subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Outstanding

- Since the last inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength. This is due to the dedicated and highly effective staff body, which is skilfully led by the determined and clear-thinking headteacher. Consequently, the headteacher enjoys very high levels of respect and approval from staff, pupils and parents alike, as well as from colleagues within the multi-academy trust and beyond.
- The headteacher and staff team have ensured that improvements are long lasting. Together, they have unswervingly focused on doing what is right for the pupils. At the same time, the school community is unified in its pursuit of high standards in all areas of school life. As a result, pupils' achievement has steadily improved and is now excellent. Pupils are happy and confident; they consider themselves to be strong contributors to the school's success.
- The headteacher plays a key role in the trust and has supported a number of other local schools within the trust and beyond it. The trust's leaders recognise her effectiveness. Membership of the trust is a two-way process, with the school receiving support as well as giving it. Not only have practical matters been dealt with very well, such as site maintenance, but also leaders and governors have developed well through working collaboratively in the trust, especially subject leaders.
- The leadership of learning is very effective. Of note is how well subject leadership has been developed. Although the school is very small, teachers with subject responsibility are provided with very well thought-out opportunities to share and further develop their expertise. Subject leaders for mathematics, English and science make good use of their expertise in supporting learning in different classes.
- The headteacher and senior leaders' judgements about how effectively pupils are taught are accurate. They rigorously scrutinise pupil progress information to check that all areas of learning are equally strong. Leaders are not in the least complacent, and areas of relative weakness, such as writing, are therefore tackled robustly.
- The curriculum has been developed expertly. The content, focus and design of the curriculum have an extremely positive effect on pupils' learning and progress. There are high-quality opportunities for learning in the creative and foundation subjects, both in lessons and through trips that are carefully linked to the topics being studied. Memorable moments are thoughtfully planned, and include talks from visiting experts and writers. A raft of volunteers transmit their skills, knowledge and passion to pupils in a wide range of additional subjects.
- The new, more challenging, requirements of the national curriculum have been fully embraced, for example the development of mathematical reasoning. The science curriculum is carefully thought out to ensure pupils understand key scientific principles and have the knowledge and language required to interrogate them through practical experiments. Access to modern foreign languages is boosted through teachers from the multi-academy trust. Pupils leave the school very well grounded in the subjects they will need to succeed in at secondary school.
- Developments in assessment have been carefully and thoughtfully undertaken. The

school has created its own bespoke assessment approach. Teachers have ensured that the bar is set suitably high and, consequently, key performance indicators are geared towards pupils reaching above the expected standard. Standardised tests are astutely used to gain as full a picture as possible of how well pupils are progressing. Leaders make good use of schools in the trust to check the accuracy of teachers' marking.

- The leadership of behaviour is excellent. The values of the school are successfully embedded within pupils' day-to-day experiences. Pupils therefore actively promote them in all that they do. They seamlessly interlink with fundamental British values. Good conduct is therefore part and parcel of the school's culture. The highly visible headteacher makes excellent use of her frequent contact with pupils, both in and out of lessons, to reinforce what is expected and reward those whose behaviour has been exemplary.
- There are very few pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The strategic uses of resources financed by additional funding and by the trust means these pupils are well catered for and make strong progress. They are superbly served by the additional clubs, which leaders ensure are accessible to them, and by the support offered by the assistant trained to help pupils manage their emotions.
- Additional, carefully chosen clubs run after school, and a well-organised breakfast club runs before school. They make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education. After-school clubs range from newspaper club to tag-rugby and there are also a range of clubs with a creative focus. Of note is the emphasis placed on developing pupils' spirituality through, for example, dedicated prayer spaces and opportunities for quiet contemplation. Although the school is of a Christian character, all faiths are well represented in this aspect.
- Sports premium funding has had a big impact on the school because it has been used with very clear objectives in mind, namely, to widen pupil participation and strengthen teaching skills. Consequently, despite being small, the school has a number of successful sports teams.
- Pupils whose progress is slower are identified very rapidly and taught very well by specially trained assistants. They catch up quickly overall; however, the contribution assistants make is not equally strong in all areas and year groups. Leaders have identified this as a priority.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are dedicated to making the school as good as it possibly can be. Governors hold the school's leaders firmly to account. They have rightly insisted they are autonomous and are committed to making decisions that are right for the school's unique context. For example, governors decided to keep the committee structure within the multi-academy trust. They therefore make a significant contribution to ensuring the school continues to flourish.
- Governors have ensured the school's continuous development by asking leaders challenging questions, which are based on their secure knowledge of the school. Their contributions and insights are firmly rooted in their close and diligent monitoring of the school's raising attainment plan.

- Governors are rightly adamant that no ceilings are placed on the potential that each pupil has. They do this successfully by ensuring targets set for teachers' and pupils' performance are sufficiently high and relevant to the specific context of the school.
- They keep a very close eye on safeguarding and other welfare issues, checking rigorously that government guidance is adhered to.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher is the designated lead but has ensured other staff are trained for this role. Consequently, there is always someone available who has the necessary expertise. As the designated lead, the headteacher provides the yearly in-school update training for all staff, including those responsible for running the breakfast club. This is boosted by regular safeguarding briefings throughout the year and as standing agenda items at meetings.
- In this small school, the headteacher knows all the pupils and their families very well. This enables her to deploy appropriate and effective support for children, and their families. To do this, an assistant has been specially trained to work with targeted pupils, helping them articulate, understand and manage their emotions. This exemplifies how the school builds provision to meet pupils' needs.
- Agreed procedures are conscientiously followed and records are kept very diligently. Referrals made to the local authority are pursued doggedly. Staff are highly vigilant and no concern is considered too insignificant to report because of the way it helps establish a full and detailed picture of what support each pupil needs.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Outstanding**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are highly effective. Pupils learn very well, show high levels of intellectual curiosity and are both challenged and stimulated by the work teachers set for them.
- Teachers are very proficient at meeting pupils' needs in mixed-year classes. Pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding very well. They are given the chance to learn from their older classmates as well as to gain fluency in skills through practice. Pupils are self-motivated and know which learning method works best for them.
- There is a very high degree of consistency in the use of agreed approaches to teaching to ensure learning is sufficiently challenging. Of note is the focus placed on providing pupils with the chance to apply their skills and gain as deep and nuanced an understanding of the subject matter as possible. This is very effectively underpinned by the bespoke and well-designed approach to assessment the school has developed.
- In the vast majority of lessons, across a range of subjects, pupils make strong progress. This is because they are taught to choose the most appropriate tasks, from the three their teachers suggest, two of which usually require levels of skill and knowledge that are well above what might be expected for their age. Teachers carefully check that pupils' selections are appropriate and provide support, which enables them to access the hardest task of which they are capable. This serves all pupils very well, especially the most able.

- Of note is the way pupils read, understand and analyse challenging texts. They are guided in developing a highly sophisticated understanding through discussions with their teachers and peers. For example, Year 6 pupils were comparing Wilfred Owen's first world war poem, 'Dulce et Decorum Est', about the savagery of war with a poem that presented a more favourable view of war. They were confidently able to compare the poets' viewpoints and use quotations to justify their ideas.
- Teaching in mathematics is excellent and has developed since the previous inspection, due to the strong input of the specialist leader. The way pupils, from an early age, develop mathematical reasoning skills is particularly noteworthy. In key stage 1, pupils are trained to think mathematically, for example by designing their own word problems and trying them out.
- Pupils' mathematics books show that the work is pitched to challenge even the most able mathematicians. They do sometimes get the hard calculations and problems they are set wrong, but teachers' careful guidance helps pupils learn from their mistakes.
- Work in pupils' books is of very high standard, especially, but not solely, in mathematics, science and English. Clarity of expression, the considered and deliberate use of key grammatical structures and cursive handwriting have been successfully emphasised. Across the range of subjects they are taught, pupils write at length, using the correct spelling, punctuation and grammar, showing pride in their work.
- The tasks teachers set for pupils are varied. Some, for example, require pupils to move from working alone to working with others, or from working inside the classroom to using outside learning spaces. Teachers use probing questioning to check pupils have understood all aspects of the tasks they are set. Teaching assistants for the most part make a strong contribution to learning, especially in core subjects. However, this is more effective in some classes and subjects than in others.
- Parents praise the impact of teaching on their youngsters, one commenting: 'The teaching style is creative and inspiring, which motivates my children to always do their best and more importantly enjoy their learning'. This is seen in the way the headteacher ensures learning in non-core subjects is closely monitored.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are eager to learn, conscientiously settle to the tasks they are set and are adept at learning from each other. Pupils are fully engaged in their own learning and are committed to developing their skills as learners. They often probe their teachers, using incisive questions about what they will be learning next and how different topics will link up.
- Pupils present their work very well and are committed to academic endeavour, often displaying high levels of resilience. This means that although pupils sometimes get things wrong and make mistakes, they are clear that their mistakes help them learn well.

- In this small community, pupils play a key role in running the school. Their leadership roles are not tokenistic but carefully considered. Pupil leadership is a rich seam that runs through the school; it maximises pupils' confidence and sense of well-being, and also helps them maintain focus. Pupils undertake an array of leadership roles, including peer reading, acting as buddies for key stage 1 pupils when they work online, and playground monitors. Worship monitors ensure assemblies and acts of worship run smoothly.
- The teaching assistant who has recently trained in supporting pupils in developing a better understanding of their emotions has given pupils valuable guidance in how to maintain a sense of well-being. She makes a strong contribution to pupils' welfare.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils work and play very harmoniously. Incidences of misbehaviour and bullying are rare, but should they occur they are dealt with very effectively by staff.
- Staff make very good use of rewards to encourage pupils to display positive attitudes, but the predominant culture within the school is that being kind to others is its own reward. This is consistently modelled by staff and older pupils, and reinforced through the school's mantra: wisdom, responsibility, kindness.
- Pupils attend school regularly because they want to be in school, learning. Despite this being a small school, its staff and pupils are outward looking. Staff remind pupils that the communities to which they belong are diverse.
- Parents are pleased with the attitudes, values and behaviour inculcated by the school. One commented: 'The school has a family ethos with excellent core values, offering support and encouragement for my children to grow in confidence and respect'.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **Outstanding**

- High teacher and pupil aspirations, very effective teaching and assiduous tracking of pupils' progress are successfully combined to ensure pupils achieve very well. Results in both key stages have been well above average for the last three years. In 2016 tests and assessments, the school maintained its high achievement profile, despite the increased levels of challenge in the curriculum. Pupils make strong progress, in many cases exceeding national expectations, even from average starting points.
- Pupils do very well in key stage 1. There has been a three-year trend of significantly above average achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes are especially strong in reading. In 2015, all pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics test; and in 2016, 93% achieved the standard.
- In 2015 in key stage 1, pupils scored well above average in each of the separate subjects in which they were assessed. This strong achievement continued in 2016 when, in the more challenging key stage 1 tests and assessments, a higher than average proportion reached expected standards, with all achieving this threshold in reading. This is significantly above the national average. In part, this is because leaders and teachers rapidly implemented the new, more challenging curriculum when it was

first launched.

- In key stage 2, strong, and in some cases very strong, progress is also evident. In 2015, pupils achieved highly, with a well above average proportion making better than expected progress in writing and mathematics, and an above average proportion making better than expected progress in reading. Consequently, last academic year, improving progress in reading was sensibly a focus for the school and a very positive impact was made.
- Teachers' high expectations also mean that most-able pupils do well. For example, in 2015, just over one third of Year 6 pupils achieved Level 6 in grammar, punctuation and spelling, just over one quarter did so in mathematics, and slightly less than a quarter in writing. Again, this was significantly above national levels.
- Key stage 2 results in 2016 showed that pupils' progress remains very strong, especially in reading and mathematics. Here, significantly above average progress scores place the school in the top 5% of schools nationally. Writing progress, although positive, was slightly lower. The school has thoroughly analysed the reasons behind this and taken very effective action.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is less than 5%, so in many classes there are no disadvantaged pupils. There is a similarly low number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff carefully track and support the achievement of these pupils so they make the same strong progress as their peers.
- Staff closely monitor the progress of all pupils throughout the year in core and foundation subjects. Teachers use a range of strategies to ensure that pupils know how much progress they are making and that pupils are fully familiar with the level of challenge presented in national tests.
- Current work in pupils' books in a range of subjects is of a high standard and shows pupils making strong progress since the start of the academic year. Pupils have developed new skills, refined their writing style and gained a deeper understanding of the substantial concepts to which they have been introduced.

## Early years provision

## Outstanding

- Since the last inspection in 2011, there was a slight dip in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development in 2013 and 2014. Due to highly effective improvements implemented by the early years leaders, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development has risen and in 2015 and 2016 it was well above the national average.
- In 2014, the school established a Nursery class as part of the early years to ensure greater coherence in pre-schooling. The Nursery has a very positive effect in ensuring that children start Reception ready for the challenges it holds. Teachers in the setting are highly skilled in their practice and sharply focus on ensuring that each individual makes rapid progress from their starting points. They are safe and very well looked after.
- This academic year, writing has been identified as a priority because results were not quite as strong as in reading across the school, including in early years. The work done

from the moment children join to develop the fine motor skills they need to write well, alongside children's understanding of letter shapes and sounds, is highly effective. Children are well supported by teaching assistants in developing their writing skills. For example, assistants help children complete a wide range of mark-making activities.

- The outside play area is set up very well and, although quite small, it provides carefully thought-out opportunities for children to learn through play. These are modified according to the regular assessments of children's needs, conducted by the staff. Children in the outside play area could very confidently articulate what they were playing and how it was helping them learn.
- The early years leader is not complacent and monitors the setting rigorously. She has wisely focused on improving the quality of assistants' questioning. Her close observations of assistants when they are supporting children, and the feedback she provides based on these, effectively improves their practice.
- Whole-class phonics is taught very well and children make rapid progress. They build quickly on the skills the vast majority have gained in the Nursery class and many can identify the sounds letters make and blend sounds to form words. Children cope well with the challenges of reading letters written in cursive script. The leader has wisely recognised that this does cause some difficulties and very successfully supports children who find this temporarily confusing.
- Children are supremely confident in the setting, eager to share and learn. They engage with adults and each other very well. They are rightly given challenging activities to complete, which they relish. Children are very good at moving from one type of learning to another and many can make impressive links and connections between their learning, unprompted by their teachers or assistants. They leave the setting fully equipped for the challenges of key stage 1.

## School details

Unique reference number	140278
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10019403

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sophie Sheard
Headteacher	Louise Warren
Telephone number	01367 870236
Website	<a href="http://www.bucklandprimaryschool.org.uk">www.bucklandprimaryschool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head.3222@buckland.oxon.sch.uk">head.3222@buckland.oxon.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 March 2011

## Information about this school

- The school is a much smaller than average-sized school and is part of The Faringdon Academy of Schools.
- The school is designated as having a religious character.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional money provided by the government) is well below average as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. None have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans.
- Since the last inspection, a new chair of the local governing body has been appointed.
- The early years consists of a Nursery class, which children attend on a part-time basis, and a Reception class, which they attend full time.
- The school runs a breakfast club, which is accommodated close by in the village.

- The school complies with Department of Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection started as a short section 8 inspection and then converted to a section 5 full inspection.
- Her Majesty's Inspector made visits to observe learning in all classes, including in early years.
- Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised.
- Informal meetings were held with pupils as part of all visits to observe learning and also separately to hear a group of pupils read.
- The inspector met with the headteacher on four different occasions, and on separate occasions with subject and senior leaders, governors (including the chair of the governing body), and the team of teachers and assistants. A meeting was also held with the assistant responsible for running the school's breakfast club.
- Sixteen survey responses submitted by members of staff were scrutinised, as were 50 responses made by parents on the online parent survey, Parent View. Inspectors also reviewed 14 comments made by parents using the free text facility within the online parent survey and 27 responses made by pupils on their online survey.
- Documentation and policies, which included the school's own evaluation and development plans, were reviewed. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records, including safety checks made when teachers are appointed.

## Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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