

Polehampton Church of England Junior School

Kibblewhite Crescent, Twyford, Reading, RG10 9AX

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school because

- School leaders have extremely high expectations of staff and pupils. This has led to rapid improvement in all aspects of the school's work since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is outstanding and by the time they leave the school their attainment is well above average in writing and mathematics and particularly high in reading..
- Teachers tailor work to pupils' needs, use questioning well to promote learning and provide very high quality feedback.
- School leaders and staff are exceptionally committed and ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is the best it can be. The range of subjects and activities provided is excellent and as a result pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners.
- The school is very welcoming, caring and supportive of all pupils and staff. Teachers know their pupils extremely well and provide rapid and effective support.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Pupils are eager to learn and show high levels of respect for each other.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school has excellent arrangements in place to ensure pupils are safe at all times.
- Senior leaders and teachers have an accurate understanding of the school's performance and the pursuit of excellence and sustained improvement is underpinned by the outstanding work of the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Board and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence including the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, reports on the quality of teaching and documentation relating to the safety of children.
- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons, two of these jointly with senior staff.
- An inspector listened to a group of pupils read.
- Inspectors attended assemblies and observed pupils' behaviour both during teaching time and at breaktimes.
- An inspector met some parents informally at the start of the day and took into account the responses to the school's own surveys. There were 64 responses to the on-line Parent View questionnaire.

Inspection team

Peter Callaghan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Valerie Ives

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Polehampton Church of England School Junior School is an average-sized school.
- The school federated with Polehampton Church of England Infant School to form the Polehampton Schools' Federation in September 2011.
- Most pupils are White British and a few are from Romany, Asian and mixed heritage families.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Very few of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the training of teaching assistants raises their expectations of pupils' achievement and leads to higher levels of engagement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils join the school with above average attainment and leave with attainment that is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The more-able do particularly well with many pupils reaching the higher levels in mathematics and writing and the majority doing so in reading.
- The progress of those pupils entitled to the pupil premium is rapidly improving now that funding has been used to create smaller teaching groups that focus on the ability of pupils.
- Pupils with special needs are supported very well. Their progress is improving rapidly and the gaps with all pupils nationally are closing as a result. Very occasionally, their progress slows when they become too dependent on the adults and are not given enough opportunity to think for themselves. .
- Progress, especially of girls in mathematics prior to the establishment of the Polehampton Schools' Federation, was too slow. Now, progress has accelerated rapidly and has been sustained, with a high proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress compared with national averages.
- Excellent arrangements are in place for pupils who need to catch up with reading. The school has put in place highly effective measures to raise standards and support individual pupils with their reading. A great deal of emphasis is placed on reading and pupils read daily to a teaching assistant. Pupils also take considerable responsibility for monitoring their own progress in reading through the use of target cards. As a result, pupils of all abilities make outstanding progress in reading.
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- Pupils for whom English is an additional language are making, and exceeding, typically expected progress compared with national figures.
- Pupils in all year groups are making much better progress in writing compared with all pupils nationally. Many examples of outstanding written work are on display around the school creating interest and pupils' pride in their achievement.
- Pupils also make excellent progress in mathematics. Progress in Year 6 has lagged behind in the past but is improving rapidly now that pupils are grouped according to ability. A mathematics specialist is developing exceptionally well the confidence and achievement of pupils, especially of girls in Years 5 and 6.
- In mathematics, teachers use many effective strategies to challenge pupils of all abilities and extend their understanding of calculation and problem solving. This supports their learning in other aspects of the curriculum.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teachers create a welcoming, calm and extremely positive learning environment in which pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers have very high expectations of achievement. Pupils have a very clear idea about the next steps in their learning and have many opportunities to reflect and review their progress.
- Much of the teaching in all year groups and in most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good. The combination of commitment and excellent pupil attitudes ensures that almost all pupils are making rapid and sustained progress.
- Lessons are well structured and engage the interests of pupils throughout. Teachers are generally highly skilled at helping pupils work independently and initiate their own ideas and most are well trained in phonics (letters and the sounds they make).
- Pupils taking part in the Big Write programme are rapidly improving the quality of their

handwriting, and regular spelling and grammar teaching has enabled pupils to make rapid progress with their writing skills.

- Planning and assessment are strengths of the school. Teachers systematically refer to previous learning and provide time in lessons to ensure that pupils have understood what they need to do to improve. The quality of marking has improved since the last inspection and excellent feedback is given. Pupils see a definite purpose in what is written and this supports their outstanding achievement.
- Teachers hold regular pupil progress meetings to discuss what is necessary to help pupils improve. They understand exceedingly well the best strategies that will support pupils' learning and meet their individual needs. Planning and tracking are robust and rigorous throughout the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special needs are often taught in smaller groups where effective support is put in place to address under achievement. For the most part they are supported extremely well, although very occasionally they become too reliant on adult support.
- Teachers check understanding and anticipate extremely well where and when to intervene with support. Targeted support for those eligible for pupil premium funding and those who are under achieving is prompt and effective. This has had a notable impact on quality of learning of under achieving pupils.
- The school has excellent strategies to support the development of language and communication skills by providing many learning opportunities for pupils to speak freely in front of their classmates and the whole school in assemblies and school plays.
- Teachers use high quality resources to support their teaching. Pupils have been taught to make excellent use of interactive whiteboards.
- The large majority of parents agreed that their children are taught well and are making good progress.
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The behaviour and safety of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary and contribute fully to an exceptionally positive atmosphere for learning throughout the school. Pupils work together extremely well and show high levels of respect for each other. They are eager to learn and are highly motivated.
- Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils, especially those who lack confidence, to take on responsibilities and leadership roles. The house system is highly effective in promoting friendly competition and team spirit in a range of sporting and cultural activities. Leaders are democratically elected and pupils take responsibility for making decisions. Pupils develop confidence to make their own judgements. Pupils are very articulate and enthusiastic about their school. Younger pupils have 'buddies' who look after them extremely well.
- Pupils feel their views are valued and listened to by staff. For example, the school council presents its feedback to the governing body and pupils know that their views are being heard and are followed up. Pupils take the lead in organising charity work, for example for Children in Need.
- Pupils act extremely competently as school ambassadors, magazine editors, eco-warriors, librarians and door monitors at break times. Older pupils work confidently in reception for a half an hour at lunchtime answering telephone general enquiries and greeting visitors with high levels of courtesy.
- The large majority of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agreed that their children were happy, safe, and well looked after.
- Break time activities are very well organised and older pupils help to ensure that younger pupils play safely in allocated areas in the playground. All perimeter gates are locked and staff keep a watchful eye everywhere.
- Pupils' understanding of the different types of bullying is secure and pupils were clear about internet bullying and its consequences.

- Attendance is high, there have been no exclusions and the level of persistent absence is very low.

The leadership and management is outstanding

- The senior leadership team provides exceptional leadership for the school. Leaders have high expectations and are highly ambitious and uncompromising in their drive for all pupils to maintain and sustain the highest levels of achievement and personal development.
- The Federation Schools' Development Plan is a robust working document and is rigorous in its evaluation and accurate in its assessment of its schools' relative weaknesses. Governors and senior leaders ensure that it is being implemented. This represents a significant change since the school was last inspected and is fundamental to the outstanding progress and improvement which has been made.
- The use of data is outstanding. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of school improvement and have identified the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils through effective tracking and monitoring. As a result, high quality support has been put in place rapidly to address under achievement. Senior leaders hold all staff to account and challenge in a professional way. Governors and staff set targets against the Teachers' Standards to promote outstanding pupil progress.
- Arrangements for observing lessons and giving feedback to teachers are secure and highly effective.
- There is clear structure to leadership through the federation and members of the team have clear roles which are monitored by the governors effectively. Teachers have excellent links with the staff in the federation infant school and share good practice through joint staff meetings and exchange visits. The arrangements for the transition of pupils are exceptional.
- The high quality of teaching is supported by good quality professional development. The school's newly qualified teachers are provided with highly effective support and are now making an excellent contribution to the school's plans for improvement and the quality of teaching.
- Senior leaders and those in charge of subjects and aspects of the school's work are very knowledgeable and provide outstanding leadership.
- The development of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is outstanding and embedded in the curriculum and everyday life of the school. The leadership team has ensured that high expectations of behaviour have played a major part in promoting high quality teaching and learning.
- Colleagues from the advisory service in Wokingham have provided effective support in all aspects of performance management.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The present governors formed the Polehampton Schools' Federation. They are extremely committed to sustaining progress and are outstandingly well informed. They visit lessons, talk to pupils, talk to staff and hold leaders to account robustly for all aspects of the school's work, including through arrangements for performance management which are highly effective. They ensure strong engagement with parents and carers. Governors manage the resources of the school very effectively and ensure that the pupil premium funding is used through the nurture programme to provide firm support for eligible pupils. They are ensuring that the school development plan is being implemented. The finance, community, curriculum and buildings committees analyse school data and monitor pupils' progress with reports from the senior leaders to get at the root cause of any under achievement. Their interventions are based on improving educational and personal progress, curriculum enrichment, welfare and the well-being of all pupils.

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	134899
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	403665

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Federation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Allistaire Leighton-Young
Headteacher	Penny Litson
Executive Headteacher	Helen Ball
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2008
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