

Edith Cavell Lower School

Manton Lane, Bedford, MK41 7NH

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She is supported enthusiastically by a strong senior leadership team in bringing about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governance has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Governors have high expectations of the senior leadership team and check closely on how well pupils are doing.
- Pupils behave well and have a positive attitude to learning. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils get on well together in this culturally diverse school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively and pupils have good understanding of what is right and wrong.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is effective. Teachers ensure that, regardless of background or ability, all pupils make good progress. Standards throughout the school, particularly in reading and writing, are rising rapidly.
- Children get a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle quickly, enjoy school and make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils exceeded the nationally expected standard in the end of Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check in 2014.
- Revision of the National Curriculum and arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress against the new requirements are not finalised.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, two of which were seen together with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a number of other shorter visits to lessons and attended an assembly. They spent time looking at pupils’ books and heard some pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils’ attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan.
- In making their judgements, inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), a recent school survey of parents’ views and 37 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

Inspection team

David Wynford-Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Tomkins

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to the average primary school.
- Currently, there are eight classes in the school – two Reception classes, three in Key Stage 1 and three in Key Stage 2. Nursery-aged children join the others in the Reception classes. Nursery -aged children attend on a part time basis.
- The majority of the Nursery children transfer to the Reception classes where they are joined by others. Some have attended other settings; others have not.
- The majority of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from a White British background is considerably smaller than that found in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than average. Few are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at school action level is above average. The proportion identified with a statement of special educational needs is average. (The onsite special educational needs unit, for pupils with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum condition, moved to a nearby school in September 2014.)
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those who are looked after.
- The headteacher was appointed in April 2012, following several changes in leadership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate improvements in the teaching of phonics so that most pupils exceed national expectations by:
 - monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching by measuring it against Year 1 phonics check results
 - making sure pupils consolidate their knowledge of phonics by using the skill in all subjects.
- Complete the implementation of arrangements for the National Curriculum and ensure assessing and recording of pupils' progress and attainment match the changed requirements.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Strong and effective leadership by the headteacher, the support of senior leaders, staff and the local authority and the strengths of governance enable pupils to get a good education. Standards are rising and pupils are making good progress. Leaders create an ethos where pupils have positive attitudes to learning, teaching is good and achievement is strong.
- All leaders evaluate the school's performance accurately to identify any weaknesses and take action to deal with these. Consequently, the key areas for development are correctly identified and set out in the detailed school development plan. Subject leaders are helping to improve results with the aid of the effective training they have received.
- Good leadership of early years provision enables children to gain in physical and emotional well-being. Consequently, they make good progress and achieve well.
- The headteacher undertakes regular observations of teaching and evaluates its impact on pupils' learning. Well-directed training has improved teaching. For example, staff have worked closely with the local authority and external consultants to help to improve their skills in teaching phonics. However, the impact of better teaching of this skill does not yet show the intended impact on results in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Teachers have regular meetings with the headteacher for review of their teaching and of pupils' progress. Teachers are called to account if any pupil is not making at least the nationally expected rate of progress and, if failing to do so, action follows immediately to remedy the situation. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the extensive range of learning opportunities provided. Pupils are given many opportunities to enrich their education, for example through educational visits and celebrating festivals from different countries and religions. Creativity through art is celebrated throughout the school. Pupils from all ethnic heritages share their rich cultural identities with each other. They are also helped to gain an understanding of right and wrong and grasp the responsibilities of citizens in current British society.
- Staff are working together effectively to incorporate the changes required by the revised National Curriculum. Updated procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress against new curricular requirements have not yet been applied in practice.
- In all classes, leaders ensure that there is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Topics are carefully planned so that pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat study themes.
- The local authority provides good support. Officers have worked effectively with the headteacher, staff and governors in analysing data on pupils' attainment and progress, setting targets and improving teaching. The local authority ensures that members of the governing body have the skills to check on, and if necessary, challenge senior leaders about the school's performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is strong. Governors attend courses and arrange training sessions for themselves and the governors of neighbouring schools.
 - Governors vigorously promote good relationships within the school and the local community and never accept discrimination of any sort.
 - Members of the governing body check to make certain that procedures to keep pupils safe are followed and that the school meets the requirements for safeguarding.
 - Governors have a good understanding of performance data on attainment and progress and are able to compare the school's results with national and local data. They use the data to set the headteacher challenging targets and regularly check on the school's performance towards these. They check closely the targets set for individual teachers to improve their practice. The process for rewarding good

teaching is contingent upon pupils' good achievement.

- The school's finances are monitored well. The governing body checks the school's spending twice a term and makes sure that the primary sports funding and pupil premium allocation are spent as intended. They are satisfied that pupil premium funding is used effectively on additional staffing and resources to narrow any gaps between eligible pupils' achievement and that of others. The sport funding is used to employ specialist sports staff and train teachers, to extend the range of sporting activities and clubs and to enter various sporting competitions. The activities are having the beneficial impact intended on pupils' physical fitness and well-being.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have a positive attitude towards learning and enjoy their work. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils want to do well and please their teachers.
- Attendance has risen steadily and is in line with the latest national average. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons. Pupils' better attendance and positive attitudes to learning have helped them make more rapid progress.
- Leaders have placed greater emphasis on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Consequently, pupils are thoughtful, responsible and considerate of others. The valuable opportunities to celebrate pupils' cultural heritages guide them to look after one another and be polite in the way they speak to each other and to adults.
- The positive fostering of good relationships helps pupils to get on well together during lunchtimes, and to play sensibly on the playground. Pupils show respect for the school environment. Displays and equipment are valued. There is no litter.
- Staff and most parents responding to the questionnaire and the online, Parent View, survey think that behaviour in the school is good.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Children's safety is a very high priority from the early years provision onwards. Leaders make sure the building is secure, staff are checked for their suitability prior to appointment and safety guidelines are followed.
- Staff ensure that pupils understand the dangers when using the internet and what to do if any express concerns.
- Pupils feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They say that incidents of inappropriate behaviour or racist incidents are rare and should an incident occur, they know who to turn to if they are worried. They are confident their concern will be dealt with fairly and swiftly by senior leaders.
- Pupils understand different types of bullying, for example name-calling, homophobia, fighting, racial bullying, or religious intolerance. They say that such behaviour is rare in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make sure that pupils build effectively on what they have learned and understood and that all make good progress.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Accurate day-to-day assessment of pupils' progress and attainment enables teachers to plan challenging learning activities for pupils of all abilities. Consequently, those who find learning difficult, the most able and those who speak English as an

additional language make good progress in line with their classmates. Throughout each lesson, teachers check carefully that pupils understand the work and are making the progress intended.

- Teachers promote pupils' reading, writing and numerical skills effectively. However, although inspection evidence confirmed good teaching of phonics in English. There is insufficient practice of this skill in other subjects.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Therefore, pupils are confident to share their ideas with each other and with the adults. This practice effectively promotes their social skills, their ability to communicate clearly and to respect other cultures.
- The school is strongly committed to equality of opportunity for each individual. All pupils' progress is checked and assessed carefully and where there is any danger of pupils slipping behind they are given effective support from the class teacher and well-deployed teaching assistants.
- The marking of pupils' work in their English and mathematics books is good. Pupils are given clear guidance on what they have to do to improve their work. This helps them to make progress and reach their challenging targets.
- Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage use the outdoor and classroom areas imaginatively to help the children learn successfully in a safe and secure environment.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards have risen in all subjects and pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly over the last two years. Pupils in all classes are currently making good progress and achieving well.
- Effective support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables them to make broadly similar progress to that of their classmates. Teachers and teaching assistants frequently check on the progress of each individual and provide carefully directed help when needed to ensure progress does not falter.
- In 2013, Year 2 disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding achieved well, but not as well as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils were about a term behind their classmates and all pupils nationally. School data for 2014 show that the gap in attainment closed and disadvantaged pupils were no more than half a term behind their classmates. Gaps continue to close by Year 4, but the school's analysis of this year group in 2014 still showed disadvantaged pupils' achievement was not equal to that of their classmates. During the inspection, disadvantaged pupils were seen to be making good progress and achieving well in all classes.
- From their various starting points, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, given starting points on entry below what are expected nationally, some children do not reach good levels of development in all areas by the time they enter Year 1.
- In the 2013 Year 1 phonics check, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was similar to the national average. Provisional data for 2014 indicate that a broadly similar proportion reached the standard. This represents good, but not outstanding, progress from their starting points on entry to the school. The additional focus given to teaching phonics has not yet been realised in higher scores in the phonics check.
- Standards have improved considerably over the last two years. Year 2 results in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013 were ahead of national averages. Provisional results for 2014 were better than those of 2013 in all subjects, particularly in reading and writing.
- Standards at the end of Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014 were close to what is usually found at this age nationally. Inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' work, lesson observations and the school's assessment records indicate that pupils are on track to reach higher standards in all subjects by the end of

the current academic year.

- Pupils writing skills are developing especially well in all classes. Older pupils are encouraged to bring their writing to life through the use of adjectives, adverbs, similes and metaphors. They use dictionaries frequently and confidently. Most pupils in Year 4 read confidently and explain their reasons clearly for their choice of book. For example, some relate this to a favourite author while others to their interest in the subject matter. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, but sometimes struggle in reading key words – such as 'subtract'.
- Most-able pupils are making good progress. They respond well to challenges posed by teachers. The older pupils who are particularly able read with expression and good pace, and seldom hesitate over words. They turn confidently to a thesaurus to extend their vocabulary when writing. In mathematics lessons, they are able to explain their thinking clearly and use numbers confidently.
- The primary school sports funding is used effectively. Staff are more confident in teaching a range of sports and as a result pupils are eager to become involved. Pupils have a good understanding of how sporting activities contribute to healthy living and are eager to take part in the wide range of sporting competitions.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Teachers and other adults work together as a team to develop provision and to ensure a common approach. They act as positive role models and promote the children's health, safety and well-being successfully, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- All children behave well and relationships with adults are good. Nursery-aged children get off to a good start. They enjoy the various activities in the well-organised classrooms and outdoor areas. The older children with whom they share the classroom help them settle quickly and feel safe.
- Children's skills on entry to the Reception classes are generally below those expected for their age. Children of all abilities, and especially those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their starting points.
- By the end of the Reception Year, children's skills and knowledge are close to what is expected of a typical 5-year old, and they are suitably prepared for Year 1. The attainment of the children on entry to Year 1 in 2014 was higher than that of previous years.
- Teaching is effective. The children know what is expected of them. Activities are well planned so that children build on their previous learning. Frequent assessments are accurate and systematically recorded in the children's learning profiles.
- Procedures for keeping children safe are well established. Regular checks are undertaken to make certain that equipment is safe.

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	109433
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	448378

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Meghan
Headteacher	Heather Cooke
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2009
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