

Arbury Primary School

Carlton Way, Cambridge, CB4 2DE

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Parents and pupils love this welcoming school. Pupils achieve well. Special classes and small groups are used very effectively to help them understand how to improve their work, especially those who find the work difficult.
- Children get a flying start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and thrive in this caring and stimulating environment.
- Teaching is good. Some is outstanding. Classrooms are fun with plenty of attractive resources to encourage all pupils to make progress. The teaching and progress of pupils who have English as an additional language are very good.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and exemplary around the school. Pupils care for one another and feel very safe. They act safely because they are taught how to do this extremely well.
- The headteacher is highly committed and ambitious for the success of the school. He inspires pupils to do their best and is well supported by a dedicated deputy headteacher and staff.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and governors have maintained the strengths in pupil's personal development, teaching and achievement. They have improved attendance significantly. With the strong support of staff the school is well placed to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their writing skills in longer pieces of work in subjects other than literacy.
- Teachers do not always ensure that standards in grammar and handwriting are high enough across subjects.
- Middle leaders are not using data fully to raise standards across all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw teaching in all parts of the school in 22 lessons, including some that were observed jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Short visits were made to watch pupils learning in smaller groups. In addition, pupils were heard reading.
- Work in pupils’ books and on display was examined. A sample of work, completed by pupils supported through the pupil premium funding, was scrutinised.
- The team looked at a range of documents including the school’s self-evaluation and plans for improvement, policies and records of pupils’ behaviour and attendance, and those relating to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and after school.
- Inspectors took into account 18 responses to the online (Parent View) survey and the views of a parent who wrote to the lead inspector. They also considered comments from 38 staff who responded to Ofsted’s questionnaire.

Inspection team

Marianick Ellender-Gelé, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector
Christopher Birtles	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a very large school compared to other primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are White British, although over a third have a minority ethnic background. The proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs receiving extra help to address moderate learning difficulties (school action) is well above average. The proportion of pupils receiving additional support for their complex learning needs (school action plus) is below average. Eight pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Over a third of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The school receives additional funding known as the 'pupil premium' for these pupils, based on the number of pupils in the care of the local authority, from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals. There are currently no pupils from service families in the school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum levels expected for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage includes two Reception classes with a total of 60 children.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club and a range of after school activities.
- The school has two awards: the ArtsMark (Gold) for its work in the expressive arts and the Equality Award for promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards of writing by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in longer pieces of work in subjects other than in literacy
 - checking that grammar and handwriting are of high quality when used across subjects.
- Improve middle leaders' understanding and use of data to raise standards in the subjects and areas for which they have responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well during their time in the school, regardless of their ability level or background. When children start in Reception, their stage of development is below that usually typically seen at their age and, for about a third, it is well below. An above-average proportion of children start school with limited experience of speaking English. They learn this new language very quickly through activities that are fun and expertly led by staff.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage team plan the work very carefully to ensure that children make good progress. Children's personal skills 'improve so quickly it is unbelievable' according to some parents and carers. Inspectors agree and, although children show below-average standards in most areas of learning, attainment by the end of Reception is rising rapidly.
- Throughout Key Stage 1, teachers' skilful planning of activities used to help pupils practise their skills in listening, speaking, writing and numeracy ensures that pupils' understanding develops rapidly. In Years 1 and 2, pupils persevere when faced with challenging words, such as 'regurgitate', linking the letters they know very effectively to the sounds they make. Pupils correct themselves readily when they misread an unfamiliar word so that the story makes sense. As a Year 2 pupil said 'my teacher will be impressed that I can read this long word'. Over this key stage, pupils are given frequent opportunities to read with an adult.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 has risen over time and it is now broadly average. This represents good progress from pupils' starting point. In 2013, pupils who speak English as an additional language did better than other pupils in the school. Boys' and girls' results compared well to their respective national averages although girls did better than boys in writing and boys did better than girls in mathematics. Pupils currently in the school learn equally well in subjects.
- At Key Stage 2, attainment has fluctuated in recent years but is broadly average over time. The proportion of more-able pupils achieving higher levels compares favourably with national standards. In 2013, fewer boys than girls reached the highest levels (levels 5 and above) in mathematics. This is being addressed by leaders through the provision of additional learning experiences for more-able pupils, which are increasing their rate of progress.
- The extra help provided to pupils through the pupil premium funding is planned carefully because a significant proportion of this group have additional needs. In recent years, these pupils did less well in the tests than their classmates and were about six months behind in their learning in both English and mathematics. Results in 2013 show that they achieved as well as similar pupils nationally, but not many made rapid progress in mathematics and writing. Current pupils are on target to do better and gaps in attainment are closing, particularly in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Staff know the needs of these pupils very well, including those who have the potential to do better than expected.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points. A parent told inspectors that she had moved her son, who has additional needs, to Arbury School because she wanted the best for him.
- Pupils usually write neatly in their literacy books and teachers check this work regularly. However, when pupils write in other subjects, for example, in science or geography, the quality of their handwriting and the accuracy of grammar lapses and this is not always promptly challenged by teachers.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers provide interesting and stimulating lessons that motivate pupils. Resources used are varied and selected carefully. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and they strive to do as well as they can.
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully. They manage the groups effectively and brief the teaching assistants thoroughly so that all adults in the class know exactly what they have to do.
- Marking gives pupils feedback so that they can improve and pupils regularly review their own or their partner's work; this helps them to do better. Pupils encourage their classmates and make very perceptive judgements, such as 'your handwriting could be neater'.
- The teaching of pupils who have English as an additional language is a strength of the school. These pupils make rapid progress and achieve very well. The leader of this area of work is highly competent. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants know how to support these pupils and they make rapid progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is very good. The youngest children, in Reception, are eager to apply their knowledge and use the attractive outdoor space well. One pupil told the inspector that finding the 'shapes outside in the wood was really exciting!' She spontaneously and proudly named them all. Teachers and support staff think carefully about the best way to help the youngest pupils learn.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects. They ask questions skilfully to deepen pupils' understanding. They have high expectations of all pupils. This leads to good progress in literacy and numeracy. They use a range of ideas to promote pupils' love of reading. For example, pupils had fun sharing their 'extreme reading' experiences in assembly, which included reading dangling from a tree.
- There are two main reasons why teaching is not outstanding. First, pupils are not given enough opportunities and time to write extensive pieces of work so that they practise and develop their writing skills across subjects. This is because the activities they are given are too limited and restrict their opportunities to do really high quality work. Second, the importance of clear handwriting and accurate grammar are not always reinforced across all subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good and contributes to the good progress they make. The school operates a highly effective behaviour and attendance system to ensure that school starts promptly.
- The way pupils from different backgrounds work and play together is exemplary. Strong moral values and respect for others are promoted successfully throughout the school. The 'sharing assembly', where personal success is celebrated, is a joyful time for pupils and teachers.
- In lessons, pupils listen very attentively. They give those who are learning English plenty of time to express their point of view. This is an excellent example of the respectful behaviour expected by the school. However, attitudes to learning are not outstanding because pupils' do not always take enough care when presenting their work.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe. They know how to keep safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils have a good understanding of various types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They are clear that bullying is not tolerated and are very confident of their ability to talk to a member of staff if they have any problems.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey agree that their children are happy, feel safe and are well looked after. The breakfast club is very well attended. It is a lively place and a good way to start the day.
- Attendance is much improved and is now average. The 'Ajay Bear' (meaning 'unconquered' in Sanskrit) is used to promote excellent attendance and is a 'star prize'; pupils compete avidly to get 100% attendance so that they can take him into class for the week. Request for extended leave are only granted in exceptional circumstances.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher, supported by staff and governors, are taking decisive action to improve pupils' progress. This includes setting challenging targets and improving teaching further so that it is always at least good and more is outstanding. Robust strategies have improved the attendance of current pupils.
- Senior leaders closely monitor all that goes on in the school. Regular checks in classrooms mean that they know where there are strengths and areas that need further improvement. This has helped them to eradicate weak teaching. Reviews of pupils' progress and of the quality of teaching inform the management of teachers' performance.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together effectively and share best practice. Newly qualified teachers are very pleased with the support that they receive. Staff are not complacent. Senior leaders seek and obtain expert advice from the local authority and other schools in the area. They enable teachers to visit other schools to observe outstanding practice. The school has strong links with the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education.
- Since the previous inspection, middle leaders, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have taken a more prominent role in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching. They develop their areas of responsibility effectively. However, their analysis and use of pupils' progress data require improvement. The assessment recording system is fairly new and middle leaders are not yet using all available information to its full potential.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. Pupils take part in a range of social and cultural activities, such as visits to places of worship in the local community, to extend the strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that takes place in lessons. Pupils are very pleased with the many free after-school activities. There is a real 'buzz' in these sessions.
- The school uses the primary school sport funding well to increase participation in physical education and sport. For example, teachers work with a coach to develop their own skills in gymnastics. Dancing is particularly popular. Pupils access a good range of inter-school competitions through the Cambridge School Sports Partnership. Special programmes, such as Activ8, target the least active pupils. The impact of this work is evident. Pupils volunteer to join teams and compete. They understand choices about healthy lifestyles and show much enthusiasm in being active.

- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Staff and governors regularly update their training. The school works extremely closely with families and relevant agencies so that pupils who are at most potential risk are very well protected. A counselling service supports pupils and develops their resilience at time of crisis.
- All parents who responded to Parent View indicated that they felt that the school was well led and managed and all would recommend it to another parent. Inspectors agree with parents who said that the headteacher is extremely kind and approachable. He is passionate about the success of all pupils in the school.
- The local authority, recognising the school's quality, provides appropriate levels of support.

The governance of the school:

- Governance continues to be effective, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Governors and the headteacher have been preoccupied by some difficulties in staffing but these issues are now resolved. The Chair of the Governing Body has frequent meetings with the headteacher and governors are welcomed into lessons. Consequently, they have first-hand experience of the quality of teaching and leadership. Governors understand how the decisions about the performance of teachers and how staff are to be rewarded should reflect the progress their pupils make. Governors know about the spending of pupil premium and primary school sport funding and check that it makes a difference to pupils' progress and well-being.
- Governors ensure that all arrangements for securing pupils' safety and well-being are met and that the school's finances are managed properly.

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	110664
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	440517

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	Community
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Maher
Headteacher	Ben Tull
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2011
Telephone number	01223 359568
Fax number	01223 518130
Email address	office@arbury.cambs.sch.uk

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