

Downton CofE VA Primary School

Gravel Close, Downton, Salisbury, SP5 3LZ

Inspection dates

7–8 March 2013

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.

- The drive, enthusiasm and vision of the headteacher has transformed the school from good and high achieving to being outstanding, creating an exceptional learning environment where all pupils can thrive.
- Achievement is outstanding and the attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is above the national average. A high proportion of pupils make better than expected progress.
- The outstanding quality of teaching in the Reception class means that the children get off to an excellent start in an exciting, purposeful and inclusive environment.
- Pupils with a disability or special educational needs achieve highly and make outstanding progress in all areas of learning. This includes pupils in receipt of support through pupil premium funding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons that are exciting and full of interest for pupils to capture their enthusiasm. The headteacher frequently checks the quality of teaching and learning and has an accurate view of strengths and areas to be developed further.
- The behaviour of all pupils is outstanding, both in and outside the classroom. They work hard and apply themselves well, and show interest and concern for one another. They are very proud of the school and their achievements.
- The school promotes a highly effective, creative and imaginative approach to education that interests the children, who are keen to learn a range of subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the heart of the school's success and underpins all of the school's strengths.
- The leadership team including teachers responsible for key areas and the governing body form a highly effective team. The governors are knowledgeable, well informed and provide support as well as asking searching questions.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or part lessons taught by 12 teachers and teaching assistants, of which nine were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6, and also held meetings with two groups of pupils. They also used lunch- and break-times to talk to pupils around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the Chair and members of the Governing Body, members of the school management team, teachers with responsibility for key subjects and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to the analysis of performance information, records of monitoring of the quality of teaching and tracking pupils' progress as well as documents relating to safeguarding children.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Consideration was given to the 62 responses to the online Parent View survey and one letter addressed to the inspection team.
- Questionnaires were analysed from 21 staff.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Philip Hibbs	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Downton CofE VA Primary School is a smaller-than-average-sized school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or in care of the local authority, for which the school receives additional income (the pupil premium), is well below average. There were no pupils in the care of the local authority in the last academic year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils who are supported through school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is a school improvement adviser and works with a number of other schools. She has taken the lead in establishing a range of cluster activities, targeted at improving outcomes for children, including 'Able and Interested' days.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school provision that were included in the inspection.
- The school has a number of awards including Artsmark, International Schools Award, Eco-Schools Silver Award and Sing-up Silver Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain pupils' outstanding progress and high achievement, so that each pupil remains able to reach their full potential by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently adapt tasks to match the full range of abilities in their classes
 - making sure marking always tells pupils how well they are doing with advice on how to improve
 - providing time for pupils to follow up the improvements suggested in marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children enter Reception with skills that are broadly in line for their age nationally; they make better than expected progress because of the high-quality provision and teaching. Teachers observe children carefully, moving them on quickly to the next stages of learning. They make rapid progress, especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development.
- Pupils' exceptional progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is well above national averages, particularly in mathematics and reading, and is improving in writing, which is above average. The school's tracking information shows that the pupils in the current Year 2 are at, or exceeding, expected progress so far in the year.
- Exceptional progress is sustained throughout Years 3 to 6. The present Year 6 pupils are on track to meet their attainment targets in mathematics, and in English it is likely that some will attain above their challenging targets.
- The inclusive approach of the school makes sure that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress, and their attainment is above national averages for similar groups, when compared to pupils nationally.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding to provide intensive support individually and in small groups for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The success of this support means that the gap in attainment between these pupils and their classmates has narrowed rapidly in both English and mathematics and is confirmed by their average points scores.
- Sensitive, well-organised support from teachers helps pupils to gain confidence in their own ability and promotes their learning well. Teachers create a stimulating learning environment and pupils use resources well to support their work. Work displayed in classrooms and corridors is of a good quality.
- Children enjoy reading. Younger pupils acquire a very good understanding of letters and sounds and use their knowledge extremely well to read unfamiliar words. Pupils who read to inspectors were enthusiastic about reading and demonstrated excellent skills and understanding for their age. Reading records show children read regularly at home, which further enhances their reading skills.
- Parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey strongly agree that their children make good progress at the school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Parents and carers, pupils and inspectors agree that the outstanding achievement is the result of consistently good and often outstanding teaching.
- Teachers and teaching assistants set out clear learning outcomes and success criteria. They check the learning and adapt activities throughout the lesson to make sure pupils have the right level of support and challenge to meet their individual targets. Teachers have high expectations for all pupils.
- Excellent relationships and positive attitudes to learning allow pupils to reflect on their learning and targets, and what they need to do to move forward.
- Activities are extremely well planned to match pupils' abilities. For example, in a Year 1 numeracy lesson, various differentiated activities provided an opportunity for pupils to extend their understanding of shape. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, pupils were creating an extended piece of writing based on an 'Adventure Quest'; pupils made very good use of the resources and could explain what they were learning very well in relation to their individual targets.

- Teachers use links between different subject areas very successfully to make sure basic skills in English and mathematics are developed to the full. This was observed in a Year 5 science lesson, when pupils worked independently to find out how quickly sugar would dissolve, using their mathematical knowledge to support the experiment.
- During the inspection, pupils participated in World Book Day and engaged in a variety of exciting cross-phase activities over different classes. For example, Year 6 buddies joined with Reception children to work on activities based around the story of the Gingerbread Man. There was an excellent opportunity to explore the impact of sound in a story, matching phrases and words from the story to selected musical instruments.
- The teachers and teaching assistants effectively question pupils, promoting the use of technical language extremely well. This was observed in a joint lesson with pupils from Years 1 and 5. Pupils jointly created Haiku poems based on three lines and an awareness of syllables. The teacher used targeted questioning to make sure all were engaged and understood the task. The Year 5 pupils also showed their skills of supporting and questioning the Year 1 pupils to ensure they had a good understanding of syllables when creating the Haiku poems.
- Marking is regular. However, it does not follow a set format. There was some evidence of next steps in some of the pupils' books to help move learning forward and included a few responses from pupils showing their understanding of their progress and next steps, but this was not consistent across the school.
- Very occasionally, progress slows when teachers fail to pitch learning at the right levels for pupils at different attainment levels.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Parents and carers, staff and pupils are all very positive about the behaviour in the school and the care and respect children have for each other. One child said to an inspector: 'This school feels like a second home.'
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary and they have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils embrace the opportunity to work independently to foster their learning.
- There is a consistent approach to behaviour management; as a result, inappropriate behaviour is rare.
- Children feel very safe and know who to talk to if they have any concerns; this includes an awareness of internet safety.
- Pupils are very well aware of what constitutes bullying, such as 'name-calling', and report that there is no bullying in the school.
- Children greatly enjoy taking on responsibilities, which include a very effective buddy system between Reception children and Year 6 pupils.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to be part of working groups in the school, with pupils engaging in three different councils – school, ecological and worship. This helps to develop their team and independent learning skills highly effectively.
- Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The relentless ambition of the senior leadership team, the governing body and drive of the passionate and highly effective headteacher have come together to create an outstanding school, with opportunities for all pupils to succeed and enjoy their learning experience at the

school.

- The headteacher regularly observes lessons, and provides detailed feedback to teachers as part of their professional development. This has ensured that teaching is always at least good and there is an increasing proportion of outstanding lessons. The local authority has made a valuable contribution, validating the school's observation and challenging the headteacher to make sure the outstanding progress continues.
 - Senior leaders including the Special Educational Needs Coordinator as well as teachers track pupils' progress rigorously to find out how well pupils are achieving and review the support provided to suit the needs of the individual pupils.
 - The school's self-evaluation and development plan are critical but extremely accurate, with areas for further development to maintain standards and identify which areas the school could improve further. The curriculum is vibrant and well planned to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. It provides pupils with rich and varied opportunities to engage, excite and encourage them to broaden their horizons within a secure learning environment. Pupils have access to a wide range of after-school activities such as pottery, sports and War Hammer. There is no exclusion of any pupil from any aspect of school life.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is at the heart of the school, with evidence in all lessons, at break and assemblies. Pupils' social and moral education is promoted particularly effectively. This was illustrated during the inspection when an assembly was observed. A pupil took the lead to talk about a fundraising event she wanted to promote and encourage other children to get involved in raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves.
 - Parents and carers make a valuable contribution by supporting their children, as well as helping the school by giving time and supporting events.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are determined and ambitious for the school's continued success, building in succession planning to make sure all areas are supported and no gaps are created. The governing body provides a high level of challenge to the senior staff and is not afraid to ask searching questions about the effectiveness of the school, the community it serves and the progress of the pupils, in relation to similar schools. Governors are well informed and trained. They have regular access to, and understand, external and internal tracking information. They wholeheartedly support school events and meet parents and carers at the gate at the start of the day. The governing body is fully involved in contributing to the self-evaluation and school development plan. It has a good understanding of the use of 'Teachers' Standards' in setting targets and how these affect salary progression. The governors keep a careful eye on the school's finances. They carefully monitor the impact of the use of pupil premium funding on the progress made by the pupils for whom it is provided. The governing body makes sure safeguarding procedures are robust. It checks that all requirements are fully met, and that the processes for appointing staff are secure.
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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	126475
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	403609

This inspection of the school 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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charles Greville-Heygate
Headteacher	Christina Evans
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
Telephone number	01725 510556
Fax number	01725 512335
Email address	admin@downton-pri.wilts.sch.uk

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