

Queen Emma's Primary School

Burwell Drive, Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 5JW

Inspection dates

11–12 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Most pupils currently in the school are making good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics, because of the good and improving quality of teaching.
- Support from The Mill Academy Trust (the trust) has been instrumental to the school's improvement since the last inspection. Governors are well equipped to provide effective challenge and support for leaders.
- Leaders have successfully tackled weaknesses seen in pupils' achievement in 2017. Consequently pupils' attainment and progress are improving. Results in 2018 are stronger than in the last two years.
- Senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They have secure plans in place to address remaining issues.
- Broad curriculum experiences, including a wide range of visits, contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, which is interwoven through the whole curriculum.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Pupils are confident that they are safe in school. They learn how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations.
- Although the overall quality of teaching is good, a small number of inconsistencies remain.
- Some tasks are not matched to pupils' abilities well enough, particularly for the most able pupils. Teachers do not routinely use questioning well, to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Sometimes teachers do not extend or deepen pupils' knowledge and skills well enough in different subjects. Basic writing skills are not taught consistently well.
- Pupils behave well in class and around the school.
- The vast majority of parents and carers have positive views of the school.
- Pupils' attainment remains below the national average at the end of key stage 2. However current pupils are making good progress, from their starting points, in English and mathematics. Pupils are increasingly working at age-related expectations, particularly in early years and key stage 1.
- The early years is led effectively. Children make strong progress in their learning, so most are well prepared for Year 1.
- Attendance and persistent absence are not yet in line with national averages.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the consistency of teaching so that all pupils make strong progress, by making sure that teachers:
 - match learning tasks more precisely to pupils' needs, especially for those who are most able
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills in writing such as spelling and handwriting
 - strengthen the use of skilful questioning to probe and challenge pupils' understanding.
- Increase the proportion of pupils achieving age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - further strengthening curriculum provision so that it more effectively deepens pupils' knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects
 - continuing to improve pupils' attendance and reduce persistent absence.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The trust's director of education led the school in the absence of the headteacher from October 2016. Her ambition and enthusiasm is inspirational. She has been instrumental in leading the improvements in the school following a period of significant turbulence in leadership. Staffing and leadership are now stable and include the appointment of a permanent headteacher and two other senior leaders who all started in September 2018.
- Leaders, governors and the trust have worked together effectively since the last inspection, which took place prior to the school converting to academy status. They have successfully developed a strong ethos and culture, where all staff have contributed to bringing about significant improvements to teaching, pupils' behaviour and outcomes.
- The trust's strong moral purpose to provide effective support for the school is lived out through its strapline and key values: 'Motivate, Inspire, Learn, Lead'. Their focus on five big questions (Is leadership driving improvement? Is our curriculum irresistible? Are we managing resources effectively? Are we research-based? Are we ensuring equity?) is driving school improvement and leading to greater consistency across the school and the trust.
- Leaders and governors make accurate judgements which provide them with a clear understanding of the key priorities for improvement. They plan precisely to bring about the improvement needed.
- Leaders have developed robust systems for checking the performance of pupils. They are quickly able to identify those pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their work. As a result, leaders ensure that support is put in place so that these pupils make more rapid progress.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding to support the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Pupils are now monitored more closely and leaders use a broad range of additional support to help pupils catch up. Staff have a clear understanding of the pupils' barriers to learning and use targeted verbal feedback effectively to help pupils to learn better.
- The special needs coordinator has a good understanding of how well pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities learn. She has worked effectively with parents to ensure that education, health and care plans are in place. She works well with parents and staff to ensure that pupils who need additional support in school receive it.
- Extensive training from leaders and through the trust has supported the development of new approaches to the teaching of English, mathematics and the wider curriculum. Staff are now more confident and have developed their subject knowledge. They compare their assessment of pupils' learning with other schools within the trust and with schools in the local area. This has given teachers a better understanding of the age-related expectations for pupils. Leaders are aware that more pupils need to reach

the expected standard, particularly in key stage 2. Historical gaps in learning are being addressed to help pupils catch up quickly.

- The curriculum is planned carefully to meet local needs. It is broad and balanced and gives pupils memorable first-hand experiences, such as trips to Bournemouth beach in key stage 1 and visits to a local river in lower key stage 2. The curriculum generally deepens pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in English and mathematics, but does this less successfully in other subjects.
- Pupils are provided with many opportunities to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development actively. Carefully planned experiences weave through all aspects of school life. Staff are beginning to develop pupils' understanding of British values such as tolerance and respect. Leaders recognise that further work is needed to embed pupils' understanding of democracy, rule of law and liberty.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the use and impact of the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding. They ensure that this funding is used effectively to increase the range of sporting activities that pupils can participate in. The introduction of a teaching app for PE has led to improvements in the planning and assessment of PE.

Governance of the school

- The trust has overall responsibility for governance of the school. It works effectively with the local governor committee.
- The local governor committee has a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and of the further improvements they would like to make.
- Governors bring a range of skills and experiences to their roles and this enables them to challenge and support leaders effectively. They keep their knowledge up to date by taking part in training sessions organised by the trust.
- Governors receive detailed information from leaders about the attainment and progress of pupils in a range of subjects. This ensures that they are well informed about the progress the school is making towards achieving the goals in the school improvement plan.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding.
- Leaders have put clear systems in place to safeguard pupils. Leaders ensure that staff receive effective training in safeguarding. Leaders also provide staff with useful updates throughout the year. This keeps staff vigilant.
- Leaders and staff work well together to ensure that any concerns about a child's welfare are shared, recorded and reviewed appropriately. The school's home school link worker liaises effectively with outside agencies and ensures that referrals are made in a timely manner. She also provides additional support for families when needed.

- Governors regularly monitor safeguarding procedures and practices in the school to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They feel confident that staff will address concerns they may have. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, they learn about road safety and 'stranger danger'.
- The vast majority of parents agree that the school keeps their children safe. One parent said, 'My children feel happy and safe at Queen Emma's School.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved. Leaders have introduced a range of new approaches to teaching, which is starting to provide greater consistency. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are now making good progress across a range of subjects.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and is enabling pupils to develop their reading skills more quickly. Accurate assessment of pupils' phonic knowledge makes sure that teaching is precisely tailored to their needs. Pupils enjoy their phonics sessions and use their knowledge and skills to read unfamiliar or difficult words successfully.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved. Leaders provide helpful support and guidance for teachers about how to teach mathematics effectively. Leaders check pupils' work to review their progress. However, although pupils' outcomes have improved this year, attainment remains below the national average, particularly in key stage 2.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are given opportunities to use practical equipment in mathematics to support their learning before moving on to more complex tasks. Fluency is developed through a regular focus on calculation strategies. For example, in Years 5 and 6 pupils practise their times tables every day. Pupils also have the opportunity to apply their understanding through problem-solving and reasoning tasks. Pupils' books show that while teachers provide opportunities for pupils to solve problems, their reasoning skills are less well developed. Plans are in place to address this.
- Most learning support assistants provide effective support for pupils from a range of ability groups. They have a good understanding of pupils' needs. As a result, they tailor support to meet pupils' educational, emotional and social needs well.
- The teaching of grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting is not consistently strong in every year group. Consequently progress is not as rapid as it could be for some pupils, particularly in writing.
- Many teachers check carefully on pupils' understanding of what they are learning. However, on occasion, some staff do not probe pupils' thinking or question pupils well enough to deepen their understanding in different subjects.
- Teachers occasionally do not match learning tasks well enough to pupils' learning needs. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, which slows their progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively when their teacher is talking to them and respond well to their instructions.
- Leaders ensure that pupils gain a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They provide pupils with games and sports at lunchtime. The curriculum ensures that pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. Pupils also take part in the 'daily mile', which provides additional opportunities to exercise.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They report that when it occasionally does occur, they speak with adults in the school. It is then resolved quickly.
- Most pupils take pride in their work, but this is not consistent across the school. Some teachers' expectations for high standards of presentation are too low.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders' concerted efforts have resulted in sustained improvements in pupils' behaviour. Staff across the school promote positive behaviour skilfully. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond positively most of the time. Occasionally, pupils' attention can wander when work is not matched well enough to their needs.
- Pupils' conduct in and around the school is calm and orderly. Pupils move sensibly around the school. At playtime and lunchtime, pupils also behave sensibly together.
- Current rates of attendance are below the national figures particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders are taking decisive action to address this.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Published information shows that by the end of Year 6 in 2017, pupils' attainment at both the expected standard and the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics was well below national figures. Progress in mathematics was also significantly below national figures.
- Provisional 2018 results, at the end of key stage 2, indicate a strong improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard and higher standard. However, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics for this cohort remains behind that of other pupils nationally. This is due to a legacy of weak teaching in previous years.
- However, progress has now quickened throughout the school. The school's assessment information and work in books show that the proportion of current pupils reaching age-related expectations across the curriculum is increasing.

- Early reading is taught well. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been above that seen nationally for the last two years.
- In key stage 1, provisional 2018 results show that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is now in line with national figures. More pupils reached greater depth in reading and mathematics than seen nationally. However, fewer pupils reached greater depth in writing. Leaders have identified this as a priority for improvement.
- Pupils' books and school assessment information show that disadvantaged pupils across the school make good progress in both English and mathematics from their starting points.
- Work seen in the books of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities indicate that these pupils make strong progress, from typically lower starting points. This is as a result of effective support for their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get a positive start to their education in the early years because they are taught effectively by well trained staff. Activities are carefully planned to meet children's needs and stimulate their interest. Leaders are ambitious for all children to achieve well and be happy. Parents value the support their children receive.
- In 2017 and in 2018, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was above that seen nationally. The proportion of children exceeding a good level of development in English and mathematics was also above the national average in 2018. Work seen in books indicates that children make good progress from their starting points. Consequently, children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders make effective use of the early years pupil premium funding. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are well supported and the vast majority achieve a good level of development.
- Well-established routines in the early years are effective in supporting children to be ready to learn and have positive attitudes. During the inspection, children new to school had settled in well and were enjoying the learning opportunities provided for them. For example, children enjoyed developing their fine motor skills during a 'dough disco' session.
- Children are curious and able to concentrate for sustained periods of time. Children played together well in the mud kitchen, sharing different tools.
- Adults support children's learning well and help to ensure that they are happy and safe.
- Leaders have placed a firm focus on supporting children's development in communication and language, particularly for boys. Outcomes show improvements in boys' attainment.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Children quickly learn the basic skills of reading. They can apply the sounds they have learned when spelling words as they write.

- Leaders ensure that the welfare requirements are met. Safeguarding is effective. Children behave well and listen carefully to adults and each other.

School details

Unique reference number	142362
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10053455

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The Mill Academy Trust
Chair	Kate Sutton
Headteacher	Phillip Jacobs
Telephone number	01993 704770
Website	www.queen-emmas.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	head.2304@queen-emmas.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Queen Emma's Primary is an average-sized school. It joined The Mill Academy Trust in October 2015. The trust board of directors and the local governing body oversee the work of the school.
- The director of education from the trust, led the school in the absence of the headteacher from October 2016. She has now returned to her job at the trust. The substantive headteacher and two senior leaders started in September 2018.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is in line with national figures.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning across the school. Senior leaders jointly observed most lessons with inspectors.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break was observed.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and around the school and held a formal meeting with pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, director of education, senior leaders and class teachers. In addition to this, they met with members of the local governor committee, a group of staff and those responsible for safeguarding and attendance. Inspectors also spoke to the chief executive officer from the trust.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and the school's improvement planning. They also looked at minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's own policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents during the inspection, as well as 58 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View and 54 free-text comments. Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils gathered in formal and informal meetings.

Inspection team

Mo Galway, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Dunmall	Ofsted Inspector

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