

Standens Barn Primary School

Flaxwell Court, Standens Barn, Northampton, NN3 9EH

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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 school has grown considerably in effectiveness since its previous inspection because of the relentless focus by leaders, managers and governors on improving teaching and raising achievement.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Marking clearly shows pupils how to improve their work.
- Pupils achieve well from their different starting points so that they reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils aspire to be brave, enthusiastic, safe and thoughtful and do their 'best', in line with the school's values. This is reflected in their outstanding behaviour and appreciation of safety.
- Children in the early years make good gains in their progress because they find learning stimulating and fun. Staff know the children very well and plan for their individual needs.
- The governing body's effectiveness has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Under its new Chair, the governing body has benefited from training. It holds school leaders to account well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Too few pupils reach the highest levels of attainment.
- Pupils do not routinely join their writing. This slows them down and means they do not always write neatly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 32 lessons or parts of lessons, including 12 jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. The lead inspector also attended a whole-school assembly.
- Members of the inspection team heard pupils read and, with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and subject materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, and a telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 21 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also spoke informally to parents in the playground and considered the school's own survey of parents.
- The inspectors considered the 37 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Senior	Additional Inspector
Margaret Dutton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in each year group.
- Two fifths of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups, which is above average. Over a quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language. This is also above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils join and leave the school outside the normal times.
- A third of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (additional funding which in this school supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). This is above average.
- Less than one tenth of pupils are identified as disabled or with special educational needs. This is below average.
- Early years provision is full time in the Reception classes.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- A new Chair of Governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching to outstanding by:
 - fully challenging all pupils so that they reach the highest levels of attainment they can, especially in reading and mathematics
 - ensuring all pupils correctly join their writing as they move through the school and so write efficiently and neatly.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has developed a purposeful ethos which is understood and embraced by pupils, parents and staff alike. This motivates pupils to try their best and creates a culture where behaviour is impeccable, good manners reign and pupils flourish.
- The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection as all staff have worked as a united team to enable pupils to succeed. Teaching is now consistently good. Standards have been rising more rapidly than nationally and all groups of pupils achieve well.
- The longer the pupils remain in the school the greater the progress they make. Pupils, who join late, often speaking very little English, invariably catch up with their peers by the end of Year 6.
- The leadership of teaching is effective. The school has worked well in partnership with other schools and shared its own best practice. This has enabled teachers to benefit from coaching and high quality training.
- The pupil premium is used very effectively to support eligible pupils both academically and in their personal development. The funding is spent on additional teaching and on subsidising clubs and visits so that all pupils can take part in the full range of activities.
- Middle leaders carry out their duties well. They have ensured consistency of good practice in their areas, for example in developing the curriculum and through marking.
- Senior leaders keep a close check on the school's work and form very accurate views about how well it is doing. This enables them to plan effective actions to improve the school further. For example, they have planned new assessments following the removal of levels of attainment.
- The quality of the curriculum is particularly strong because staff have worked together carefully to ensure that subjects engage pupils and are relevant to their interests. For example, a focus on barn owls in Years 5 and 6 (linked to the school's emblem) gave pupils a variety of unique experiences. These included dissecting owl pellets. Music and art are strong features of the school's work.
- Clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum well. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well, ensuring they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, using a mould from the Tower of London, pupils created poppies out of clay, and covered a grass bank with them in a moving remembrance ceremony. The school ensures that all pupils are treated equally, excellent relationships are fostered, and that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements and are highly effective in keeping pupils safe.
- The local authority has provided an appropriate level of support for the school and helped it to forge partnerships with other local schools.
- Parents support the work of the school and comment on the improvements they have seen over the past year. They feel the school keeps them well informed about how their children are doing.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is spent effectively on promoting sport, new clubs and competitions with other schools. During the inspection, pupils from the school won the Northampton Town football competition. Staff benefit from dance coaching and are growing in confidence.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because not enough teaching is outstanding and attainment is not consistently strong across all subjects at the highest levels.

■ The governance of the school:

- The effectiveness of governance is good. Governors have undergone considerable training and are knowledgeable about the school, including the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing compared with other pupils nationally. They study the performance data closely and ask searching questions. They know how the pupil premium is being spent and the impact it is having. They also know about how teachers' performance is managed and the targets they are set. They ensure that only the best practice is rewarded and that any underperformance is tackled. The new Chair has refocused the governing body on driving improvement so that governors are having a positive influence on the school's work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They have excellent attitudes to learning and a real enthusiasm for knowledge. They show great respect to one another and to adults. They move around the school very calmly and with consideration for others.
- Behaviour is managed extremely well by staff. There is consistent application of the school's behaviour policy. The curriculum engages pupils very well and makes them want to learn. It is designed to appeal to them.
- Pupils take responsibility in a wide variety of ways. 'Digital leaders' are trained by the University to support the adults and their peers with technology and young leaders organise games for the younger children. The blog team keeps pupils posted with what is happening, and 'nightflyers' publish the school newspaper.
- Pupils develop ambition and perseverance. They like the school's 'aspire to be' (A2B) programme that gives them opportunities to excel in their chosen fields.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils and parents say that bullying is not an issue. Pupils know about different types of bullying such as cyber bullying and that they can call on an adult for help if upset.
- The school works very well with pupils who join late with difficulties and enables them to take a full part in school life. It can point to individuals who have made rapid progress in their development as a result of the support they have received.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of keeping safe, both in school and at home. They know about e-safety and managing social media.
- The breakfast club is a safe and welcoming environment for pupils at the start of the day, as they socialise and make a healthy start.

The quality of teaching is good

- Positive relationships between pupils and teaching staff create a culture where learning is celebrated and pupils want to succeed. Teachers' good subject knowledge and high expectations combine to promote effective learning which enables pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils concentrate well as a result of interesting activities that motivate them. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoyed making their own musical compositions and developing a sense of rhythm. Year 4 pupils used

connectives to help them retell a story they had watched being acted out in film.

- Reception children engage in a wide range of memorable experiences, often linked to a theme. During the inspection, they went to church to understand more about weddings. This inspired them when they returned to write invitations and take photographs.
- Teachers and pupils use technology well to enhance learning and to undertake research. Attractive displays celebrate pupils' achievements and provide useful information. Large, three-dimensional, models of famous Victorians and dinosaurs excite the imagination.
- Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting groups and individuals and work closely with teachers to provide the support pupils need, especially those with special educational needs and those who have joined the school speaking little English.
- Teaching has a positive impact on learning and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils use their phonics skills (the sounds that letters make) to break down words they do not understand when reading. They read with expression and enjoy reading to volunteers from a local company. Older pupils are enthusiastic about reading. They describe their favourite authors. The school's new library has raised the profile of reading, along with electronic readers.
- The introduction of drama as part of the preparation for writing has given pupils vivid experiences. For example, Year 6 pupils played out different roles of Egyptian workers involved in building the pyramids. This gave them an insight into what life was like then for ordinary people and helped them to write about it. A new spelling, grammar and punctuation policy is being implemented well.
- A new calculation policy and a renewed focus on solving problems is improving pupils' skills in mathematics to apply their knowledge and understanding to real-life situations.
- Books show good quality work across the school with effective marking which helps pupils to improve their work. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects. However, handwriting is not always joined, which slows pupils' progress and means they do not always write efficiently and neatly.
- While teaching leads to good progress for all groups of pupils, occasionally pupils from different starting points are not given demanding enough work to reach the highest levels of attainment they can.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the school with skills and understanding below what is typical, especially in language and communication. They get off to a good start in Reception because they are given an exciting range of activities that develop their early skills well.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 from their different starting points. In 2014 Year 2 pupils reached broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. There has been a steep rise in attainment over time that is much greater than the national picture. This reflects improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Phonics is taught well and systematically. In 2014 a large number of pupils joined Year 1 who spoke very little English. This meant that the proportion of pupils that reached the required standard in the annual phonics check was below average.
- The school has adapted how it teaches phonics to take into account changes such as those that occurred in 2014. Staff are more actively involving pupils and targeting those who speak English as an additional language. This is having a positive impact and the large majority of the present Year 1 pupils are on course to meet the required standard in 2015.

- Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 and standards have been rising over time. In 2014 the proportion of pupils who achieved a good Level 4, the measure for success at secondary school, was in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportions of pupils who made the expected progress or better in this year group compared favourably with the national averages, especially in writing. Less-able pupils made outstanding progress.
- The most-able pupils are generally well challenged and similar proportions to their peers reached the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 2. Occasionally, they are not moved on sufficiently in their learning to excel as they can. In 2014, too few pupils reached the higher levels of attainment in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6 because they had not always been given demanding enough work to do throughout Key Stage 2.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve well. Gaps in attainment have closed between these pupils and the others within the school. In 2014 eligible pupils performed better than the others in reading and writing and equally as well in mathematics. Compared with other pupils nationally who do not benefit from pupil premium funding, eligible pupils were half a term behind in writing, over one term in reading and two terms behind in mathematics. In 2014 the progress of eligible pupils was particularly strong compared with that of such pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because support is tailored to their specific needs and leaders track their progress very carefully. This helps them to keep up with their peers.
- The many pupils who join the school speaking English as an additional language, often at very early stages of acquisition, make rapid progress because they are supported very well from the start. Teachers adapt learning to suit them. This means that by the end of Year 6 most of these pupils are performing as well as their peers.

The early years provision

is good

- Teaching is consistently good and aspects are outstanding. Children are given every opportunity to find out new things and explore their environment. For example, 'discovery time' enables them to ask questions around a theme, such as weddings. Children were delighted to find confetti when they opened a box.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. They learn routines very quickly and know how to take turns. They feel safe and use equipment sensibly. All groups of children make good progress because the staff know them very well. They plan activities that take into account children's interests and make good use of both the indoor and outdoor spaces.
- The early years are led and managed well. Staff keep careful records of children's achievements, which are freely available to parents. They involve parents well in their children's education. Leaders work with staff to make the most of every opportunity to develop children's language and communication skills, as this is a point for development for the early years.

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	121935
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	449027

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	364
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sheila Bryan
Headteacher	Simon Blight
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2013
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