

Down Ampney Church of England Primary School

Down Ampney, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 5QR

Inspection dates

17–18 October 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by other leaders and governors, has resulted in significant improvements since the previous inspection. The school has a purposeful learning environment where teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Leaders' rigorous checks on teaching are used to give teachers clear guidance about how to improve their work. They follow their checks with effective support and training. This has ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved rapidly over the past year.
- Teachers know their pupils well and plan to make learning challenging and interesting. Consequently, all groups of pupils, including the most able, make good progress, and attainment is rising across the school.
- The provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is well planned. Pupils receive carefully tailored support that enables them to make good progress.
- The needs of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are well catered for. Increasingly, they achieve as well as others from similar starting points.
- The curriculum is designed to interest pupils and create a love of learning. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have positive attitudes to their learning and apply themselves diligently to their work.
- Parents strongly support the school. They value the welcoming environment in which their children learn effectively and feel happy.
- Children in the early years settle quickly into school life. They are taught well and most make good progress. At times, teaching is not planned precisely enough to challenge the most able children to achieve as well as they might.
- Governors are unwavering in their support for the school. They challenge leaders effectively to gain a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Improvement plans are thorough but sometimes lack the precision to enable leaders and governors to know how successful they have been in raising pupils' achievement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that improvement plans have clear, measurable targets to enable leaders and governors to judge precisely the impact of their actions to raise pupils' achievement further.
- Strengthen teaching in the early years further by ensuring that:
 - the most able children are supported effectively to maximise their progress
 - staff are clear about the intended learning outcomes from the activities that children choose for themselves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, governors have taken positive steps to secure effective leadership and speed up the pace of improvement. The new headteacher sets a clear direction for the school and instils a strong sense of high ambition. His systematic approach to increasing the school's effectiveness ensures that improvements in teaching, learning and leadership are secured and sustainable.
- The headteacher has the confidence of his staff and morale is high. Overwhelmingly, staff are of the opinion that the school has improved significantly since he took up post and are proud to work at this school.
- A key improvement is the precise way leaders give teachers regular and helpful feedback on the strengths of their teaching and where they need to improve. The performance of staff is linked clearly to the school's priorities and governors set challenging targets for the headteacher. Therefore, all understand their role in driving improvements.
- Leaders are drawing on support from the local authority well when introducing effective strategies to improve teaching, especially in English and mathematics. They follow up their checks on teaching with clear advice and training. The impact of their work is evident in the recent improvements in teaching and pupils' progress.
- The new system for monitoring pupils' achievement ensures that leaders and governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Improvement plans are based on the correct priorities and have tight timescales for action. However, at times, plans lack specific targets to enable leaders to check precisely the impact of their actions on raising achievement.
- The curriculum is interesting and varied and motivates pupils to succeed. Residential visits and extra-curricular activities have a positive impact on raising pupils' aspirations and broadening their horizons. For example, key stage 2 pupils were very enthused by their visit to the science laboratories at the local secondary school to study microorganisms they had grown.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils' understanding of British values is developed through events such as 'Parliament week', where they learn about democracy. This ensures that they are suitably prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well and deals with any kind of discrimination effectively. The support for disadvantaged pupils is tailored to maximise both their learning and their personal development. Leaders have transformed the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Staff are better trained in how best to support pupils. Support is carefully targeted, helping these pupils to overcome their difficulties and progress well.
- Leaders use the sport premium wisely to increase levels of pupils' participation in a range of sporting activities and competitions. Pupils raise their fitness levels through

regular activities, such as running a mile and cricket ball throwing. Staff improve their skills in teaching physical education by working alongside expert coaches.

- Leaders benefit from effective support provided by the local authority, enabling them to work alongside experts and observe good practice in other schools. As a result, leaders' monitoring of teaching is much more effective, ensuring that teachers are challenged and supported rigorously to increase their performance.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school. They consider that the school is well led and pupils are well taught. They praise the improvements made by leaders over the past year in order to keep them better informed about their children's progress. They appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and his staff.

Governance of the school

- Governors are using the advice that they receive from the local authority to organise their work effectively. As a result, they are increasing their effectiveness and ensuring that they are suitably trained to carry out their responsibilities well. They are ambitious for the school and fully share the headteacher's high aspirations for pupils' achievement. They are knowledgeable about the school's performance because leaders provide them with accurate and detailed information. They ask challenging questions about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Increasingly, they make visits to check the school's work for themselves. Sometimes a lack of precision in targets in improvement plans does not enable them to judge how successful they have been in raising achievement further.
- Governors monitor the school budget effectively and manage funds well. They know how additional funds are spent to help disadvantaged pupils and to develop sport in school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders create a culture where safety and support for pupils' welfare are the highest priority. They are diligent in checking that staff training is up to date, and that staff understand their responsibilities and follow policy guidelines. They ensure that statutory guidance is followed when recruiting and before appointing new staff. Governors check that the school's single central record is maintained accurately. Staff are clear about how to recognise the possible signs of abuse and how to report any concerns promptly. Parents are unanimous that their children are kept safe in school.
- Staff know the families of children who attend Down Ampney very well, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This enables them to keep a close eye on pupils' well-being. Records show that leaders are tenacious in following up any concerns about pupils' welfare in order to secure the right level of support for families.
- Most pupils attend regularly and are hardly ever late for school. Leaders work effectively with other professionals to encourage regular attendance for any pupils of concern. The attendance of a small number of pupils with high absence rates shows improvement.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is consistently good because of improvements made over the past year. Effective new approaches to teaching writing and mathematics ensure that pupils are suitably challenged and inspired to reach high standards.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. They plan interesting work to capture pupils' attention. This is recognised by parents, who say that their children come home 'buzzing with information' and wanting to share knowledge. Pupils report that they have 'just the right levels of challenge' in their tasks. They appreciate the clear guidance from teachers on how to improve their work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in supporting pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. The 'carpet clinics' provide valuable support for any pupils in need of extra teaching or additional practice, enabling them to be successful in their learning.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, benefit from support that helps them to catch up with others and achieve well. Staff work effectively with pupils to build their self-esteem and confidence as learners.
- The most able pupils are usually well challenged in their work. The tasks set are designed to extend their thinking to enable them to achieve high standards. For example, when learning about place value, pupils are expected to explain their thinking clearly, using the correct mathematical terminology.
- Reading, including phonics, is taught well and pupils quickly become fluent readers. Teachers encourage pupils to read high-quality literature across a wide range of authors. They develop pupils' comprehension skills effectively through regular discussion about the books they read together.
- Teachers carefully build pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to use grammar and punctuation to good effect in their writing. They develop pupils' vocabulary so they are able to write successfully in formal and informal ways. Key stage 2 pupils demonstrated this when writing tourist information leaflets about Spain, making sure that they used cohesive devices, such as rhetorical questions, to capture readers' attention.
- The new approach to teaching mathematics that was introduced over the past year has transformed teaching in this subject. Teachers use the 'do it, twist it, use it' approach to make sure pupils have sufficient time to practise fluency in calculation before tackling harder work. They move pupils on quickly once they have shown competence at the 'do it' stage in order for them to reason and solve problems. This approach stretches pupils' thinking effectively so that they achieve high standards.
- Occasionally, teachers do not tailor learning precisely enough in the early years to ensure that the most able children are fully challenged.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, benefit from breakfast and after-school clubs that help improve attendance and attitudes to school.
- Warm and very effective relationships characterise the school's culture, making this a welcoming and happy place in which to learn. Pupils like the personal attention that they receive from staff as well as how their learning is explained thoroughly to them. They report that the encouraging feedback that they get about their work 'helps you to aim high'. This positive attitude is apparent in the way pupils persevere diligently with their tasks and sustain concentration for extended periods.
- The curriculum holds pupils' interest and motivates them to find out more about the subjects that they study. They like the new homework investigations and enthuse about the extra-curricular clubs on offer, for example the 'coding club'. Events such as 'Roald Dahl day', when pupils worked with an artist, enabled them to produce high-quality illustrations, helping to lift self-esteem and raise aspirations.
- Pupils undertake their responsibilities as school councillors, eco warriors and worship councillors very seriously. Increasingly in lessons, they take the initiative in their learning, using reference books and information on display to help them produce high-quality work.
- Staff are skilled in addressing pupils' personal and emotional needs. They know pupils very well and respond sympathetically and appropriately to support pupils' specific needs, especially those pupils considered vulnerable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Typically, pupils are polite, friendly and considerate of others. They look out for younger pupils in and around school so that no one is left out. Consequently, the playground is a happy and harmonious place. As one pupil put it, 'Everyone is treated equally here.' And this ethos ensures that pupils feel accepted and fully included in school life.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly positive that they feel safe and happy in school. They understand what constitutes bullying and how to combat this. They say that there is very little poor behaviour and school records support this view. Pupils state that they have the support of their friends and confidence in staff to help should any problems occur.
- Online safety has a high priority. Pupils are taught how to stay safe when using the internet, taking care not to reveal personal details and to report cyber-bullying if it occurs.

- Pupils take pride in their work, and this has become more evident over the past year. Teachers insist on tidy presentation and clear handwriting to encourage accuracy and fluency in mathematical calculations and written work across all subjects.
- Pupils understand that a few of their classmates need extra help in sustaining concentration, and they appreciate the sensitive way staff offer support so that learning in lessons is rarely disrupted.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over the past year, pupils have made better progress and attainment is rising across the school.
- From the evidence of the school's assessment information, as well as the learning and work in current pupils' books, progress is good. Pupils in both key stages achieve well. This prepares them well for the next stage in their education.
- In the previous two years, most Year 1 pupils met the standard expected in the phonics screening check. They apply this knowledge well to read unknown words, enabling them to become competent readers. Older pupils enjoy reading across the range of fiction and nonfiction literature available to them and demonstrate good levels of understanding.
- Achievement in writing is much improved and pupils make good progress in writing across subjects. They demonstrate their ability to use new and difficult vocabulary to good effect, for example when explaining in geography why a river meanders.
- Pupils show greater fluency and accuracy in calculation skills than previously. They apply their knowledge and skills to other aspects of mathematics to solve problems and explain their reasoning with increasing competence.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress and their support is matched well to their specific needs. As a result, their attainment shows improvement, especially in reading, where progress has increased over the past year.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the very few who are most able, achieve as well as others from similar starting points as they are supported well, both personally and academically.
- The most able pupils make good progress because their work is increasingly challenging, ensuring that more key stage 2 pupils are working at a higher standard.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years foundation stage is well led and managed. The new assessment system for monitoring children's progress enables leaders to know exactly how well children are doing and where further support and challenge are needed. Improvement plans are well focused. However, some plans lack precise targets to enable leaders to know the difference they make to children's achievement.
- Most children start school with the knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age. Due to improvements in teaching, children make good progress from their

starting points, especially in mathematics. For example, the very large majority of children start Year 1 as confident learners with the skills and knowledge typical for their age, and a growing proportion exceed this.

- Staff pay good attention to safeguarding and ensure that children are kept safe both indoors and out. They make sure that any children considered vulnerable are well cared for. Children play together very cooperatively and their behaviour is good.
- Parents appreciate the effective arrangements for starting school that ensure children settle quickly into their new routines. They speak highly of the approachability of staff and welcome the frequent opportunities to contribute towards their children's learning.
- Disadvantaged children are well supported in their learning and activities are adjusted to meet their needs, particularly in their personal development. Children who have SEN and/or disabilities have their needs identified at an early stage. The school works well with other agencies to ensure their needs are met, for example in the development of their speech.
- Teaching is typically good. Staff have regular opportunities to develop their skills and expertise further through training and visits to other early years providers. Children benefit from well-planned activities, including the teaching of phonics, which underpin the development of early reading and writing skills successfully.
- Children also learn from following their interests, and staff develop their language skills well as they play. The indoor classroom and the outdoor area are full of exciting and stimulating resources that capture children's imaginations and promote rich language. Children's breadth and range of vocabulary are enhanced when 'cooking' porridge in the mud kitchen. Collecting 'ingredients' promotes lively discussions, enabling vocabulary and imaginations to develop well while playing at being cooks.
- However, at times, staff do not plan precisely enough for what they want children to learn, particularly in the activities that children choose for themselves. When this occurs, children's progress is slowed, especially for the most able.

School details

Unique reference number	115664
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10058302

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Penny Morse
Headteacher	Adam Clark
Telephone number	01793 750 294
Website	www.downampney.gloucs.sch.uk
Email address	admin@downampney.gloucs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 October 2016

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are organised in two classes, with Reception children and key stage 1 pupils in one class, and key stage 2 pupils in the other.
- An above-average proportion of pupils have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2017, first as acting, then as substantive, headteacher.
- The school operates breakfast and after-school clubs from Monday to Thursday.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning across the school. Most observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, they made visits to classrooms, the dining hall and the playground, as well as attending an assembly.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors and school leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with an adviser from the local authority, which supports the school.
- Inspectors spoke informally with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as their written responses. They also took account of the six responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire and the 20 responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans. They examined information on current pupils' progress, minutes of the governing body meetings, safeguarding procedures and the plans for the use of the sport premium.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked with them in classrooms and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jen Edwards	Ofsted Inspector

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