

Micklands Primary School

Micklands Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 6LU

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| Inspection dates | 14–15 October 2015 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Outstanding |
| 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

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and is persistent in her quest to improve the school in every aspect so that pupils are given the best opportunity to succeed.
- The strong senior team shares the headteacher's vision and ambition for the pupils in the school.
- Governors support the school's leaders very well. They carry out their role with tenacity and professionalism, and provide a good balance of support and challenge.
- Teaching throughout the school is good as a result of decisive and effective action by leaders. Teachers plan interesting and engaging learning experiences for pupils, and meet the needs of different abilities of pupils well.
- Children in the early years are provided with a rich environment and high-quality expertise to enable all pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils work and play together exceptionally well. They care deeply about each other and their environment, appreciating that they all have the same opportunities to learn and make good progress.
- Pupils feel very safe, and safeguarding systems are accurately followed and meticulous in detail.
- Parents are warmly welcomed into school and they appreciate the improvements made in communication and information.
- All pupils achieve well because they make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress, as are disadvantaged pupils. This is because precise analysis identifies accurate support for them.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their mathematics skills in real-life situations.
- Middle leaders are beginning to take on greater responsibility and this needs further development.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding across the school.
- The youngest disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as others in the school. Too many of them start Year 1 behind other children.
- Pupils do not always respond to teachers' marking when this is appropriate.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding, including:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to understand and use mathematics in real-life situations
 - strengthening the role of middle leaders so that they make a greater difference in improving teaching and learning
 - supporting the youngest disadvantaged children so that they keep up with other children of the same age
 - giving pupils opportunities to respond to marking when this is appropriate.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school is remarkably well led by the headteacher who has a relentless focus on all pupils' success and has adopted many rigorous practices to ensure that every aspect of the school supports this. With the senior team, she has secured high levels of confidence of the whole school community. Staff morale is high.
- The senior staff form a strong team which has taken determined and effective action to improve the school. Weak teaching has been wiped out and pupils' achievement and behaviour have improved. The senior team has shown very strongly in what it has already done that it is able to improve the school further. It wants to make even more improvements and staff share the motivation and ambition to improve.
- The senior team does very thorough checks to find out the school's strengths and weaknesses, the quality of teaching and learning, the progress pupils make and their attendance. Where weaknesses are identified, swift action is taken to address issues and improvement is expected.
- The management of teachers' performance is closely linked to pupils' progress, and it is expected that all pupils will make accelerated progress. Teachers only receive pay rises when merited by sustained good performance. High-quality professional development is carefully planned to link with whole-school priorities as well as individual teachers' needs.
- Middle leaders review the progress of each pupil in their team with the relevant teacher and these meetings are used to review support that is in place and identify any further support that is needed for individuals or groups of pupils to address specific aspects of learning. This ensures that resources are used most efficiently across the school. The middle leaders' roles are still developing and they have yet to take on full responsibilities for their subject or year groups.
- The curriculum has been completely revised since the last inspection to ensure that it meets National Curriculum requirements. The experiences provide deep and irresistible learning for pupils around 10 learning habits they are striving for pupils to develop. This ensures that progress is rapid and behaviour has improved, particularly in lessons. The senior team evaluates the curriculum and adapts topics in the light of pupils' progress. Each half term, the deputy headteacher organises a whole-school 'enrichment day' with a different theme. These provide opportunities to engage people in the community, theatre companies and charities as appropriate. A recent example was an 'aspiration day' when parents and members of the community came in and shared their employment with pupils across the school.
- The development of British values is strong in the school with pupils taking part in democratically elected councils, such as the school council, peace council and eco council. These, along with the enrichment days, provide good opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural learning and development. In lessons as well as around the school, pupils show high levels of respect and get on well with each other, celebrating differences. Pupils say the school's religious education curriculum helps them to be more understanding of people of other faiths.
- The school is an inclusive and close-knit community where everyone is special and pupils' differing abilities and backgrounds are valued equally. Relationships are good, with staff modelling respect, which the pupils visibly follow. The school promotes equality of opportunity successfully and does not put up with discrimination of any kind.
- Pupils who receive additional government funding are now making similar rapid progress across the school to other pupils in the same year group because the support for them is so well targeted. Because all pupils make such good progress, gaps in attainment are not closing rapidly. In Reception, a significant proportion of the disadvantaged pupils start Year 1 behind other pupils. Their progress is not swift enough.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium has made a positive difference to pupils' health and well-being. It enables a broad range of experiences, such as specialist sports coaches who provide lunchtime activities for all pupils, as well as additional clubs and training for staff. More recently, the school has increased the range of PE and sport to include activities such as Zumba dancing, dodgeball and rugby. These improvements have resulted in an increase in the numbers taking part in PE and sport, participation in many local competitions and improved behaviour during lunchtime and in lessons. All this has raised the profile of sport and PE in the school.
- Parents support the school very enthusiastically. They overwhelmingly feel happy with the improvements in the school and consider their children to be happy at school and well looked after, and that the school's

leaders are successful. The school's website provides a wealth of useful information for parents.

- Attendance has recently been a focus for improvement. During the last year, the school has addressed this successfully through a determined effort to work with parents to ensure that pupils are in school.
- **The governance of the school**
 - A very skilful chair leads the governing body well. She has established a governing body with high levels of professional expertise from individuals who are generous in their dedication to the school.
 - Governors are highly committed to getting the best for each pupil and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They analyse the detailed reports they receive from the headteacher and ask challenging questions to understand what difference decisions have made.
 - They set demanding targets for the headteacher and monitor both her progress and all teachers' progress towards meeting performance objectives. These are strongly linked to the school's development plan.
 - Governors ensure that teachers' pay is directly linked to their effectiveness and they know how underperformance is tackled.
 - Finances are very well planned and managed. The spending of extra funding is carefully monitored, such as the pupil premium and the difference it has made.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school is very successful in supporting parents and children to ensure pupils' safety whether personal, emotional or academic. There are well-developed child protection procedures which are methodically followed by everyone in the school, with thorough and detailed recording.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The high expectations of the senior team and a wide variety of training have led to improvements in teaching across the school. There is an agreed approach to every aspect of teaching and common requirements of pupils' work. Teaching is good throughout the school, with some outstanding features.
- The raised expectations in pupils' progress is confirmed in pupils' work in books, visits to classrooms, discussions with pupils and the school's own checks of the quality of teaching over time.
- Teachers plan well-thought-out learning experiences for pupils of different abilities and ensure that pupils engage very positively in the lessons. Teachers ask stretching questions to extend pupils' thinking. Pupils confidently use the correct words relevant to the discussion.
- Writing has been a recent focus for development and the impact of training was seen both in pupils' books and in lessons. Pupils were confidently discussing and using accurate technical language as well as deep descriptive language as part of their America topic.
- Teachers check pupils' progress during the lesson and use this to move learning on at an appropriate pace, ensuring that pupils are aware of their learning focus. Teaching focuses on pupils making progress and they work together to enable this.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and develop sound methodology, for example in mathematics teaching, so that pupils build on what they already know and understand.
- Teaching assistants work well in supporting learning, and often teach a variety of groups in a lesson. They are well briefed. In a mathematics lesson, a teaching assistant took a lower-ability group working on numbers from one to 10 while the teacher led the rest of the pupils towards 100. The teaching assistant swapped to the higher-ability group to continue to support the work the teacher had started, while the teacher moved to extending the learning of the lower-ability group of pupils.
- Marking and accurate checking of pupils' progress informs pupils of their next steps and helps teachers to know when pupils need extra help. This is addressed quickly in an appropriate way. Pupils do not always respond to marking when this is relevant, and so occasionally miss learning opportunities.
- The mathematics teaching is sound. However, there are few opportunities used to link learning to real-life situations to make it more relevant.
- Children in Reception experience rich learning experiences across all areas of the curriculum inside and outside. All the staff are skilled at giving extra help to extend children's learning, and so progress is high. Disadvantaged pupils make similarly good progress, but do not always reach the expected standard at the end of the year. Progress is not fast enough for this group of pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils speak with great pride about their school and feel responsible for maintaining a pleasant and clean learning environment. They remind each other about their responsibilities and wear their uniform with a real sense of belonging.
- There is an exceptionally calm, friendly and nurturing atmosphere around the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very proud of their progress.
- Pupils interact sensibly and encouragingly with each other and enjoy working independently, in pairs, in groups or in teams, both in and outside the classroom. They are very flexible learners, which reflects their self-confidence to adapt.
- Pupils have forged friendship groups across ethnic, religious, social and cultural boundaries, and this shows a remarkable level of respect and tolerance towards each other.
- The school ensures that pupils are aware of how to stay safe and behave responsibly with technology. The pupils understand the importance of staying healthy and engaging in sport. They consider the school helps them to develop these alongside academic abilities.
- Bullying is very rare, and staff deal with it rapidly and effectively when incidents arise.
- There are many pupils who join the school during the school year. The staff and pupils embrace their needs very quickly and support them to settle.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are very detailed and followed correctly. All staff, governors and volunteers have undertaken relevant training to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. A determined effort to raise the quality of teaching has had a significant impact in improving behaviour in lessons, so that inattentiveness is rare and behaviour does not disrupt learning. Pupils take pride in their work and strive to do well.
- Both in and around school, pupils' behaviour is consistently exceptional and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, showing high levels of respect to staff and pupils alike.
- Attendance has risen significantly since the last inspection and is now just above the national average. The school has worked tenaciously to address persistent absence. It has reduced this very considerably. Governors also play their part in monitoring all aspects of attendance half termly.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Pupils at Micklands make at least good progress from their different starting points throughout the school and across subjects. Most pupils make accelerated progress in most year groups. Regular pupil progress meetings enable middle leaders to discuss with teachers each pupil's progress and identify strategies to support any pupils who need more support. This ensures that help is identified and put in place quickly.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving and exceeding the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6 was much higher than in 2014 and is now ahead of national summary information. Progress towards this has been very rapid and reflects the determination of the school to address issues promptly.
- The most-able Year 6 pupils achieved very well in mathematics in 2015, with almost a quarter of the pupils gaining level 6 – two levels above the expected level.
- Disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress, much in line with the rest of the pupils and therefore the gaps are not closing substantially within the school. However, these pupils are keeping up, and closing gaps in relation to national information. The 2015 information shows that disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 overtook national information for making expected progress from Year 3 to Year 6. They were a little behind the proportion making better than expected progress nationally, but significantly better than in previous years.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar good progress to other pupils and so they are keeping up, but not catching up, as starting points were different. Staff monitor these pupils carefully and ensure any necessary interventions are used to support their learning successfully.

- Pupils read with enjoyment and the impact of new phonic teaching is reaping rich benefits as pupils move up through the school. Pupils in Year 3 read with great expression, fluency and enjoyment. Pupils in Year 1 achieved well in the phonic check and the school has taken rapid action to ensure that pupils who were not at the expected level are given support so that they achieve it at the end of Year 2. The school identifies Year 1 pupils who need additional support and put this in place early. Analysis shows that often pupils who do not pass the Year 1 check have joined the school during Year 1.
- Most children start in Reception with skills that are broadly average and good progress lifts their attainment. Consequently, a very large majority reach a good level of development by the time they start Year 1. While all children in the Reception classes make good progress from their different starting points, the disadvantaged pupils often do not reach a good level of development and so start Year 1 behind the vast majority of other pupils. This gap has widened in 2015.
- Generally, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education, with excellent attitudes to learning and expectations of good progress. The majority of pupils move on at a very good standard of skill, knowledge and understanding.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in Reception with skills and development that is broadly average. They settle very quickly in this rich and stimulating environment. The early years classrooms include a large outside area which has been very well developed to provide ample opportunities for pupils to address all the areas of learning. Inside pupils move between the classrooms, while adults take focus groups and also support children who are self-selecting activities.
- The early years provides a very caring, nurturing environment in which children are warmly encouraged to develop their skills. A group of pupils made bread and were supported by an assistant who extended their language by discussing the texture and the process of bread making. The assistant encouraged the children to use the correct language.
- Children are kept very safe, and enjoy happy relationships. They work well on their own, in pairs and in groups, taking turns and sharing well. They clearly enjoy learning and are confident to seek help if they need it. Children develop good learning habits quickly. Adults give extra support skilfully with helpful and timely questions to move their learning on.
- The early years leader knows the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and each year works to addresses weaknesses, so that all children gain the best they can from their Reception Year. She has built a strong team and led training for team members. This enables, for example, the quality of teaching and learning in phonics to be accurate and consistent across the provision.
- Parents are very involved in working with the school to ensure that their children are well supported. This strong partnership benefits the children well.
- By the end of the Reception Year all pupils have made good progress, with the vast majority reaching a good level of development across the curriculum. Half of the disadvantaged group in 2015 did not reach this level while making good progress from low starting points, and the gap has widened.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 109926 |
| Local authority | Reading |
| Inspection number | 10002325 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 369 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Polly Schofield |
| Headteacher | Sharon Jones |
| Telephone number | 01189 375500 |
| Website | www.micklands.reading.sch.uk |
| Email address | admin@micklands.reading.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 26–27 September 2013 |

Information about this school

- Micklands Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school and the number on role has risen slightly since the last inspection.
- The number of pupils joining and leaving the school part-way through their primary school education is higher than usual.
- The school has pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds, with just over half of the pupils being of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly in line with other schools nationally.
- At close to one quarter, the proportion of pupils who receive support through the pupil premium is broadly in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for children who are looked after by the local authority and pupils known to qualify for free school meals. Currently there are no looked after children in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- A before- and after-school club runs on the site. This is provided by an outside organisation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and part lessons, some of which were visited as joint observations with the headteacher or the deputy. In addition, three learning walks took place to look at specific aspects of the school. Two school assemblies were visited.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at books and listened to some pupils read. They observed pupils at playtime and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's own assessment information, its check on its own performance, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at eight letters handed in from parents and two letters from children. They also considered the 88 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and comments recorded there. Inspectors spoke to some parents at the start of the school day, and took account of the 35 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

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|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Janet Sharp, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Heidi Boreham | Ofsted Inspector |
| Keith Taylor | Ofsted Inspector |

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