

# Europa School UK

Thame Lane, Culham, Abingdon, OX14 3DZ

**Inspection dates** 18–19 June 2014

| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Not Previously Inspected |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b> <b>2</b>     |
| Achievement of pupils          | Good                 | 2                        |
| Quality of teaching            | Good                 | 2                        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | Good                 | 2                        |
| Leadership and management      | Good                 | 2                        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Achievement is good overall. This is because governors, leaders, staff and pupils aim high. There is a strong will to succeed.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They cope extremely well with the demands of different subjects taught in German or French.
- Leaders, including governors, keep a close eye on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. If pupils lag behind, they are quickly identified and provided with additional help to enable them to catch up.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They care about each other and are proud to belong to the school.
- Pupils' achievement in German and French is exceptional.
- Governors have extensive skills and are highly ambitious for the school. Their dynamic plans for the future are carefully underpinned by a clear understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses.
- Teachers are self-critical and keen to discuss the impact of their work, and learn from each other. As a result, teaching is typically good.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The marking of pupils' work is not yet of a consistently high standard. Pupils are rarely given the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments and improve their work accordingly.
- Occasionally, after concentrated periods of listening during lessons taught in French and German, younger pupils' energy levels run out and they struggle to concentrate.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Over time, not all teaching has properly challenged all pupils, particularly the most able.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not yet consistently good.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons, of which four were jointly observed with the head of primary. In addition, they listened to pupils reading in each year group, including the Reception Year, looked at samples of pupils' work separately and in lessons, and observed routines at breaks and at lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior leaders, groups of pupils and other staff, including the special educational needs co-ordinator and the co-ordinator for mathematics.
- Inspectors examined 20 questionnaires completed by school staff and 135 responses to Parent View questionnaires. Telephone feedback was also received from one parent, in addition to written feedback from two other parents.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documentation, including data related to pupils' achievement and progress, governing body minutes and records of staff training and performance management.

## Inspection team

Lesley Farmer HMI, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heidi Boreham

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized, all-through free school serving children aged from four to 19.
- The school opened in September 2012 and admitted pupils up to capacity in the Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care) is much below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported at school action is much below average. The proportion of pupils supported at action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is equally low.
- The school has adopted the European Schools' curriculum model and assessment procedures. Leaders use National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments. Statutory requirements to deliver religious education are met.
- The school shares a site with the European school, whose site it will fully occupy when it eventually closes. Some facilities, such as the gymnasiums, are currently shared.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise achievement from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
  - marking of pupils' work is of a consistently high standard and that pupils have time in lessons to respond to teachers' feedback
  - the newly introduced approach to the teaching of phonics is fully understood and implemented consistently by all staff
  - pupils, particularly the most able, are routinely provided with motivating tasks designed to challenge them at their individual levels and move them rapidly forward in their learning
  - during lessons taught in French or German, teachers remain alert to pupils' concentration levels, particularly in Year 1, and adjust their teaching where necessary.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make a positive start in the Reception Year with levels of development that are broadly typical for their age. As a result of effective teaching, they make good progress during their first year in school, which prepares them well for their move to Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' progress throughout Key Stage 1 continues to be strong and their attainment in 2013 at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was above average.
- In 2013 at Key Stage 1, there was no gap in attainment between the very few pupils entitled to free school meals and their peers. In some instances, eligible pupils exceeded standards secured by their peers by as much as half a term. In current year groups, these pupils continue to achieve equally well.
- In 2013, the percentage of Year 1 pupils who met the expected standards in the phonics screening check related to the sounds letters make was considerably below the national average. Leaders have carefully analysed the reasons for this, and have taken effective remedial action. Unvalidated results from this year's tests indicate significant improvement with figures matching the percentages achieved by all pupils nationally in 2013.
- From their earliest time in school, pupils are provided with stimulating experiences which motivate them to write about what they have learned. Pupils' work shows that they write at length about their learning in exercise books and, in the case of older pupils, in individual English journals. They are expected to present their work neatly. Standards of handwriting are impressive across each of the additional languages and in English.
- In 2013, the attainment of pupils who speak English as an additional language in reading, writing and mathematics was above average. This was also true for all pupils for whom English is their first language. However, a very few pupils whose first language is French or German did less well than their peers. Leaders have effectively addressed this issue and the same pupils have since caught up in Year 3.
- The most-able pupils generally achieve well. However, in some instances, teaching does not provide sufficient challenge. In 2013, the most-able pupils in Year 2 did less well in mathematics than their peers nationally. A fresh approach to the teaching of mathematics in Year 3 has secured better standards in 2014.
- Pupils routinely practise their calculation skills and have a good understanding of number. In an excellent mathematics lesson taught in German, pupils were able to solve problems and develop good reasoning skills, while simultaneously developing their ability to communicate in German.
- Pupils are encouraged to read at home regularly as well as making use of the library. Inspectors found that pupils enjoy reading and talking about what they have read. They also found teachers' assessments of pupils' reading and writing levels in English to be accurate.
- As a relatively newly established school, leaders are acutely aware of the need to externally verify teachers' assessments as part of an ongoing process. To this end, links have been established with a local school and with Oxfordshire's Children's Services whose assessors recently verified teachers' assessments in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in their additional language of either German or French.
- The majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire Parent View feel that their child achieves well at the school. Inspectors share their views.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teaching is typically good, and has resulted in good learning and achievement since the school first opened. Records of meetings, training and discussions with inspectors attest to teachers' willingness to learn from each other and improve their practice.
- Teachers in Key Stage 1 have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and know them well. When learning is most effective, teachers keep a close eye on how pupils are progressing by asking questions to check their understanding and to make them think more deeply.
- Teaching in the Reception classes is good. Systems to observe children's learning and regularly assess their progress and development are thorough and effective.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for individuals and small groups, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, by checking pupils' work carefully and adapting the work where necessary to ensure success.
- Systems to support pupils who join the school mid-year with little or no English are effective. Teachers know these pupils well and their progress is carefully checked.
- Pupils respond well to teachers' expectations and produce a good level of work when they know exactly what is required of them. Occasionally, particularly in subjects taught in French and German in Year 1, their energies run out and their concentration wanes when they are required to listen for a long time or tasks are insufficiently varied to challenge them individually.
- The school has recently changed the way in which phonics is taught. Training for teachers has been provided but not all teachers are adopting a common approach. Although inspectors observed good phonics teaching, there is still some variability, resulting in uneven progress for a few pupils.
- Leaders have recently made the need for teachers to plan tasks and activities that are better aligned to pupils' abilities a priority. When learning is most effective, pupils tackle tasks designed to challenge them at their own levels and make good or outstanding progress. However, when work is not set at the right level, progress is slower.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Some of the marking is constructive and affirms what has worked well. However, not all of the marking is as helpful. Typically, very few pupils respond to teachers' comments or correct their work.
- In discussions with inspectors, pupils say they are taught well. Parents and carers who responded to Parent View are in agreement.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good, including at break and at lunchtimes. Their positive attitudes to learning contribute greatly to their good achievement. There have been no exclusions since the school opened in 2012.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are happy to attend every day. Equality of opportunity is an important principle. This is reflected in the way in which linguistic diversity is celebrated and non-English speaking pupils new to the school are supported by other pupils and quickly thrive.
- Attendance is routinely above average and pupils are punctual, reflecting their enthusiasm for the learning they experience.
- Pupils who met with inspectors commented that teachers can be strict and learning can be especially demanding during the German or French parts of the week. Nevertheless, they confidently expressed pride in the school, and a firm desire to achieve well and rise to the challenge presented to them.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn from and support each other both during the taught day and in clubs and after-school activities.
- Bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. Pupils know about the different types of bullying that exist, including homophobic and cyber-bullying, but say that incidents are rare and

effectively addressed by adults in the school.

- In a stimulating Year 3 science lesson delivered in French, pupils worked in pairs discussing a recent trip to the zoo. The teacher skilfully exploited this opportunity both to extend pupils' literacy in French and develop their social skills, through effective pair-work and extending their knowledge and understanding of the varying ways in which animals digest food.

## **The leadership and management are good**

- The Principal is highly committed to ensuring that pupils receive a first-rate education using the European Schools' curriculum model. He is ably supported by other senior leaders and, together, they have been instrumental in ensuring the success of the school's first two years.
- The head of primary is highly visible and checks the quality of teaching regularly, and often. He leads teaching extremely effectively and has accurately identified what needs improving, and why. Joint observations conducted with inspectors were accurate.
- Leaders have evaluated the school's effectiveness accurately. They are aware of current shortcomings and have already begun to tackle these effectively.
- The Principal and head of primary promote equality of opportunity for all pupils. They maintain a watching brief on the progress of different groups of pupils and trigger additional support, where necessary. The good progress secured by disabled pupils and those who need extra support is testimony to this approach.
- Staff training is carefully selected to address weaknesses in teaching identified at the end of the school's first year. Middle leaders are instrumental in preparing and delivering staff training, and to good effect. This is borne out by the numbers of pupils in Year 1 already at the required standard for the phonics screening tests and improvements secured in mathematics in Year 3.
- Pupils are able to access a broad range of subjects, including religious education, taught through the medium of English and French or German, throughout the week. Displays of pupils' work show how well the rich cultural diversity within the school is celebrated. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the opportunities to extend learning, such as through trips.
- Leaders have made effective use of the primary school sports funding available to them. This is helping to raise pupils' participation in a wider range of sports through access to the shared on-site sports hall, training for staff and enabling pupils to access swimming classes.
- The Principal and governors take the performance management of staff seriously. Pay rises, including for senior staff, are not automatic. As leaders are only in the second year of gathering pupils' assessment information, they are now beginning the process of aligning this to individual teachers' performance with a view to informing all future pay and performance management decisions.

### **■ The governance of the school:**

Governors are ambitious for the school and know it well. Future plans reflect their understanding of where the best teaching takes place and what aspects need further improvement. They are conscious of the need to secure high standards and good rates of progress when compared with other schools nationally and locally, particularly in the light of their decision to follow the European Schools' curriculum model. They provide strong challenge to senior leaders where slippage in standards or progress rates occur and will not accept excuses. Visits to the school, which are frequent, have focused on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and there is considerable expertise within the governing body to undertake such activity with a discerning and expert eye. Records of training undertaken attest to the seriousness with which they discharge their responsibilities. Governors are aware of their duties to analyse the impact of pupil premium and the primary sports funding, and are poised to undertake these analyses this year. They set challenging targets for the Principal and head of primary, and have arranged external support to assist them in evaluating their performance at an individual level.

## 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

|                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 138269      |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Oxfordshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 426386      |

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

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | All-through               |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Free School               |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–19                      |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                     |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 225                       |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body        |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Jutta Weber               |
| <b>Principal</b>                           | Peter Ashbourne           |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | Not Previously Inspected  |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01235 524060              |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01235 764060              |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | office@europaschooluk.org |

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