

# West Wycombe Combined School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	110236
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	378064
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Curtis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carole Burslem
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Cobb
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Church Lane West Wycombe High Wycombe HP14 3AH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01494 523318
<b>Fax number</b>	01494 523620
<b>Email address</b>	office@westwycombe.bucks.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	23–24 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378064



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## Introduction

Inspection team

David Curtis

Additional inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body, the school council and parents and carers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at data showing pupils' progress, policies relating to child protection and safeguarding and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. The inspectors looked at 134 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with those completed by staff and pupils in Years 3 to 6.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school with pupils taught in seven single-age classes. Thirty per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.

Three of the seven class teachers joined the school in September 2011, including the deputy headteacher and a member of the senior leadership team.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. Judged to be satisfactory at its last inspection, it has been successful in raising pupils’ achievement and in improving the quality of teaching. There are significant strengths in pupils’ key skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is not outstanding because of a few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and their impact on pupils’ learning.
- Pupils make good progress in their time at school and standards in English and mathematics are above average, with pupils at least a term ahead of their peers nationally. Consequently, their achievement is good. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than similar groups nationally.
- The key strength in the good teaching is in the way key skills in reading, writing and mathematics are taught. The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is very effective in children’s good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Although teachers’ marking tells pupils how well they are learning, it is inconsistent in giving them their next steps.
- A striking feature of pupils’ good behaviour is their positive attitudes to learning and the effort they put into their school work and homework. Pupils feel safe in school. A few pupils and a few parents and carers expressed concerns about how well isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with. Inspection findings link this to the school not having shared its revised anti-bullying policy with parents and carers, especially the page, ‘Bullying – a Charter for Action’.
- A strength of the good leadership and management is that underperformance by pupils is addressed immediately, with very effective intervention programmes put in place to support them. Self-evaluation is accurate, and reflects senior leaders’ monitoring of the quality of teaching. Performance management is effective, with staff targets focused on raising pupils’ achievement.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:

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- improving the consistency of teachers' marking so that pupils' next steps in learning are linked closely to their individual literacy and numeracy targets
  - improving the consistency of teachers' planning so that outcomes for pupils are based on what they are expected to learn by the end of each lesson and ensure these are shared with pupils.
- Strengthen the school's engagement with all parents and carers so that they have a clear understanding of the school's approach to preventing bullying by providing them all with a copy of the school's 'Bullying – a Charter for Action'.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Inspection findings support the views of most parents and carers that their children make good progress in school. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress and this is a marked improvement over the previous two years. Children enjoy learning and show that they can sustain interest in activities for long periods. They show real enthusiasm in learning letters and sounds (phonics), where progress is good. Children take great delight in telling 'Ted' the teddy bear whether he reads his words correctly, with, 'Better luck next time Ted!' if he gets them wrong.

Standards in reading in the current Year 2 are average, as are those in writing and mathematics. In 2011, standards at the end of Year 2 were low. Inspection findings show that these pupils, who are now in Year 3, are making accelerated progress and catching up fast on previous gaps in learning. The 'Every Child Counts' programme has had a significant impact with pupils improving their number skills by between a year and 18 months following a six-month programme. Standards in reading at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils are fluent, confident and read with expression.

In Years 1 to 6, pupils show impressive levels of concentration when working independently and this is a key factor in their high-quality writing. Across the school, pupils' skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation are good and they talk confidently about 'metaphors', 'similes' and 'alliteration'. In Year 6, the level of interest, care and pride in their work was very evident when pupils wrote their own versions of 'The Dragon Inside Me'. In all classes, pupils work very effectively in groups and/or in pairs, when they clearly listen to and respect the views of each other. Homework, where pupils use 'Learning Logs', is very popular, especially as pupils set their own learning targets. As one pupil said, 'We can show what we have learned in our own way'.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress, especially in key skills of reading and writing. Across the school, there is a significant strength in

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boys' enthusiasm for and enjoyment of learning that results in them achieving higher than boys nationally.

## **Quality of teaching**

Inspection evidence supports the views of most parents and carers that their children are taught well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teaching of letters and sounds is highly effective. Strengths in planning contribute to a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children's 'Learning Journeys' are very detailed and reflect how effectively staff monitor and assess children's progress in all six areas of learning.

Teachers have very high expectations of pupils and this is evident in pupils' impressive work rate in lessons and in the great care and pride taken in presenting their work. Teachers' questioning is good and challenges pupils to think and to explain their thinking, for example in solving mathematical problems. Where teaching is outstanding, teachers make it explicitly clear to each ability group what they are expected to learn by the end of lessons. This is the missing feature in good lessons. Pupils' work is marked regularly and impacts positively on reinforcing high-quality presentation, including handwriting. Marking tells pupils how well they are doing. However, there is inconsistency in telling pupils what they must do to improve their work. In a literacy lesson in Year 5 where the teaching and learning were outstanding, pupils knew their next steps and applied them through using their individual writing targets.

Teaching assistants and specialist teachers make an effective contribution to the good progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. The use of intervention programmes, together with support for pupils, especially at the start of lessons, is a key factor in all groups of pupils achieving better than similar groups nationally.

Teachers, pupils and parents and carers combine very effectively to promote high-quality homework through the use of 'Learning Logs'. A key strength is that pupils, teachers and parents and carers all contribute to the marking and/or assessment of homework.

Teachers use the school's 'Creative Curriculum' very effectively to develop pupils' use and application of key skills, including information and communication technology, across the curriculum. The 'Creative Curriculum' makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils and parents and carers enjoy the 'Celebration' at the end of each theme. This was very evident, for example, on the second day of the inspection, when Year 1 pupils presented the outcomes of their work on the theme 'Castles' to their parents and carers in the school hall and in their classroom.

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## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

In lessons, pupils work diligently and take genuine care and pride in all that they do, including homework. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that there is always an adult that they can talk to if they have worries. Pupils feel that the school's behaviour system is fair and accept that 'silliness' is the reason for most yellow cards being issued. Exclusions are rare and there have been no racist incidents reflecting that the school is a harmonious community. Attendance is above average and pupils' punctuality is good.

Pupils know that bullying comes in a variety of forms. They understand that it is persistent verbal or physical aggression that is bullying rather than 'one-off' incidents. They are aware of cyber bullying, including in texts, e-mail and social networking sites, and understand that racism is bullying. A few pupils, and a few parents and carers expressed concerns about how well the school deals with bullying. Inspection findings indicate that this is linked to the fact that the school has not been sufficiently proactive in raising parents' and carers' understanding of the anti-bullying policy which was revised by the governing body in November 2011.

## **Leadership and management**

The school has made good progress over the last three years in improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. This good progress, together with the effectiveness of dealing rigorously with any underperformance, demonstrates the school's capacity for sustained improvement. The governing body challenged senior leaders immediately over the low standards achieved at the end of Year 2 in 2011. Senior leaders, with the full support and regular monitoring of performance by the governing body, put in place immediate and very effective intervention programmes which resulted in the accelerated progress made by these pupils now in Year 3. Similarly, through working effectively with the local authority's '0–7 Alliance' project, senior leaders have addressed previous areas of weakness in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with the result that teaching and outcomes for children in this vital key stage are good.

The 'Creative Curriculum' and 'Learning Logs' are very effective in providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets successfully the needs of all groups of pupils in the school. Similarly, these effective features promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which, in turn, leads to an inclusive and cohesive school community. The school promotes equality of opportunity for all pupils, with the result that no groups underachieve. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. In addition to the strengths in challenging and monitoring school performance, the governing body ensures that all arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet the requirements of current legislation.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of West Wycombe Combined School, West Wycombe, High Wycombe HP14 3AH**

Thank you very much for making your contribution to the inspection through completing questionnaires, reading to us and talking to us in lessons and around the school. We enjoyed meeting you. We are pleased to tell you that you go to a good school and that it has improved since its last inspection. I am pleased to say that these are some of the areas in which the school is very successful.

- Those of you in Reception make good progress in your learning.
- By the end of Year 6, your achievement is higher than that of pupils nationally.
- You really enjoy your 'Learning Logs'.
- Teaching is good and teachers have very high expectations that you should work hard – you do!
- Senior leaders and the governing body are determined that you should all learn to the best of your ability.

There are a few things that need to be done to make yours an outstanding school. These are to:

- make sure all of the teaching and your learning are outstanding
- make sure your parents and carers understand the school's policy for dealing with bullying.

You can help, especially by asking teachers how you can make your work better and always using your individual targets to help you learn in lessons.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis  
Lead inspector

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