

St Mary's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School Woodham Ferrers

Main Road, Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 8RJ

Inspection dates

05–06 March 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Pupils make good progress from their below average starting points. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve standards that are above average.
- Children make good progress in the Reception Year and achieve well in all areas because of good indoor and outdoor learning opportunities and effective support from staff.
- Teaching is good. Teachers and other staff know pupils well and provide effective support for pupils who experience difficulties with their learning.
- Pupils display great enthusiasm for learning and thrive in an atmosphere of respect and dignity. They have good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and has been consistently above average over the past three years.
- The leadership and management of the school are ambitious for the school and are successfully driving improvement. They have high expectations of staff and pupils.
- The curriculum has a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills through links across subjects. The extra-curricular programme supports pupils' personal development well.
- The governors carry out their responsibilities effectively. They have good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as rapid as in English because teachers do not consistently provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils or match activities closely enough to their attainment level.
- The teaching of calculation is not always supported by an agreed policy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, of which two were joint lesson observations with the headteacher. The inspector also heard pupils in Years 2 and 6 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school's staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and three other members, and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of 27 responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View) that were received during the inspection, results of a parental survey carried out by the school, 13 responses to staff questionnaire and spoke with parents and carers during the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work. She looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its performance, school improvement planning, documentation relating to teachers' performance over time and records relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.

Inspection team

Tusharkana Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's is a much smaller than average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. There are very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups and none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is well below average, but the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school is slightly higher than average.
- The school holds the 'Healthy School' award and 'Sing Up' gold award.
- The school is a member of the local consortium which includes several primary schools and a secondary school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and accelerate pupils' progress and achievement in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently use assessment information to plan and deliver lesson activities that match precisely the needs of all pupils, and always provide sufficient challenge for more able learners
 - using a new policy more effectively to support the teaching of calculation across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception with skills just below those expected for their age. A stimulating environment, well-planned experiences and careful monitoring of children's progress help them to learn and develop successfully. In consequence they typically achieve above the expected standards by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In the 2012 national assessment of Year 1 reading skills the school achieved in line with the national average.
- Pupils across the school enjoy reading. Older pupils develop a good understanding of different genres and are confident in reviewing the events and characters from the books they read. Pupils in years 1 and 2 apply their knowledge of phonics (linking letters and sounds) to pronounce unfamiliar words and show understanding of the stories they read.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 has been typically above average, particularly in reading and mathematics, reflecting pupils' good progress. Pupils' current attainment is above average.
- Over the past three years, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has mostly been above average in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 has been above average in both subjects. Boys and girls across the school make good progress and achieve well. Pupils' current attainment is above average.
- Although progress is good, it is more consistent in English than in mathematics, as some more able pupils are not consistently challenged in order to maximise their achievement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of the consistent and well-targeted support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.
- Those supported by the pupil premium, including pupils eligible for free school meals, also make good progress and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6 when measured by average point scores.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching leads to pupils' good progress across the school. Most parents and carers rightly think that teaching is good.
- Teachers display good subject knowledge. They engage pupils well in their learning through effective questioning that successfully builds on their prior learning. For example, in an English lesson in a mixed-age class of years 4 to 6, pupils very effectively extended their knowledge and understanding about those less fortunate than themselves as well as enhancing key skills, as they designed a poster to persuade members of the school community to support fund raising for a worthy cause.
- Teachers make very good use of technology and promote activities linking different subjects into meaningful learning experiences. For example, in a mixed age class of years 2 to 4, pupils were encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding of life in Tudor England learned in history to write letters drawing on factual information in an English lesson.
- Teachers plan well, usually matching work to the learning needs of all groups of pupils. Nevertheless, opportunities are occasionally missed to extend the skills and understanding of the more able pupils through sufficiently challenging tasks, especially in mathematics.
- The school's current calculation policy is not sufficiently effective. Teachers have recently agreed there is a need to update the policy so that it can be used more effectively and consistently to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Pupils have useful opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of their peers to both assess their progress and to understand the next steps for improvement.

- Teaching assistants are skilful in providing effective support for all groups of pupils, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- In Reception, children are helped to become confident learners when pursuing activities of their own choice as well as those directed by adults.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' respond very well to the school's highly inclusive ethos which strongly influences their behaviour, relationships and attitudes to each other. They are well behaved and grow up as mature and confident learners.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and get on well with learning in lessons without disruption. They state that incidents of bullying are rare. On the rare occasion where behaviour is less than good, pupils state that this is dealt with effectively by adults. As a result, they feel safe and secure.
- Parents and carers, who responded to the questionnaires and had informal meetings with the inspector during the inspection, unanimously agreed that children in school behave well and feel happy and safe at school.
- Pupils understand the risks they face in their everyday lives; for example, they are well aware of cyber-bullying and risks from fire, and know what to do if they should encounter them. They have a clear understanding of what is right or wrong and this has a positive impact on their behaviour.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility through their commitment to school council work and various fundraising activities. They have established a good link with the pupils in a Christian school in Ghana, supporting it with funds they raise and regular correspondence with their peers. These activities enable them to develop a good understanding of how their actions can make a positive difference to the lives of others.
- Attendance is above average because of the effective monitoring procedures the school has put in place.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the middle leaders and the governing body, consistently communicate high expectations and have been successful in sustaining good standards in all areas of the school's work. Accurate self-evaluation successfully informs the school's priorities for improvement which have a clear focus on raising achievement still further.
 - A rigorous programme for the monitoring of teaching, supported by robust performance management arrangements and well planned professional development opportunities enhance the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievement.
 - The local authority has provided effective light touch support in view of the school's good performance.
 - The curriculum has a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Good cross-curricular links between subjects together with effective use of information communication technology enthuse pupils and involve them in their learning effectively.
 - A good range of sporting activities, as well as visits to places of interest, enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, due to its successes the school team has won a place in the High 5 Netball County final for the fifth year running.
 - Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Assemblies and
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religious studies provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on teachings from the Bible and on the core values of different religions. As a result they gain a deeper understanding of different beliefs and cultural diversity.

- Policies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are robust and these are monitored regularly. All safeguarding requirements are met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body makes effective use of a range of information to hold the school to account for pupils' achievement. They provide support, for instance in agreeing the headteacher's performance management targets. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching through their direct observations and from reports from the headteacher. They ensure that any increases in teachers' salaries reward good practice and are linked to pupils' progress. They have a good, shared understanding of the priorities in the school's improvement plan and a high commitment to the actions necessary for them to be realised. Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is spent to best effect and that the school budget is efficiently managed.
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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	115176
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	403258

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	81
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alastair Manthorpe
Headteacher	Sue Grocock
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2008
Telephone number	01245 320505
Fax number	01245 320505
Email address	headteacher@st-marys-woodham.essex.sch.uk

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