

Wethersfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Silver Street, Wethersfield, Braintree, CM7 4BP

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

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 achieve well. From broadly average starting points, most pupils make good progress and achieve above-average levels of attainment.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan challenging activities which motivate pupils so they make good progress.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for learning and successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and that of their peers.
- The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked together well to maintain good levels of achievement and teaching.
- Governors know the school well and provide a good balance of support and challenge to senior leaders.
- Strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that good support is provided for those pupils who need extra help with their learning.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough teaching of sufficiently high quality to help pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- When marking work, not all teachers make it clear what pupils need to do in order to improve and achieve higher standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited five lessons and observed four teachers. The headteacher joined the inspector for three observations.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative of the local authority. The inspector also talked to pupils to find out their views of the school.
- The inspector looked at relevant documents, including the school's improvement plan, policies regarding behaviour and attendance, self-evaluation, and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- The inspector examined the school's most recent assessment data and looked at the school's systems for checking on pupils' progress. He also looked at samples of pupils' English and mathematics books.
- The inspector took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He also spoke to some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- The inspector considered responses from 11 members of staff to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Only a small number of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium. This is additional funding that schools receive for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and other groups, including children of service families.
- The number of pupils who either join or leave the school between Year 1 and Year 6 is well above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- In 2013, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide more opportunities for focused, sustained writing so that pupils make more rapid progress and attain higher levels
 - mark pupils' work in a way that helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Most children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are generally typical for their age. Children quickly develop confidence in the caring atmosphere provided and learn how to get along with others. Overall, they make good progress and are well prepared for entry into Year 1, particularly in their knowledge of phonics (the sound that letters make).
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2 in 2013, pupils' standards were above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is particularly effective in its strategies to promote reading. Pupils regularly read to an adult during the school day. They also read at home. Good records are kept of the progress pupils are making, and effective support is provided through structured support programmes for pupils who find reading difficult.
- The progress that pupils make in writing is more variable as they move through the school. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are provided with many opportunities to write, both within English lessons and in other subjects. In these year groups, well-planned lessons and effective marking lead to rapid progress. In other classes, however, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to develop their writing skills and rates of progress are not as fast.
- Attainment in mathematics was above the national average in 2013 at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress, particularly across Key Stage 2, because teaching is challenging and builds well on what pupils already know.
- Pupils who join the school at different times make good progress because they receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants. They do not always attain the same levels as other pupils because they often have a lot of catching up to do.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because the school knows them well. These pupils benefit from good teaching and effective support from well-trained members of the school's support staff, who provide one-to-one support in class and lead small-group work. The school also works effectively with parents and outside agencies to improve outcomes for these pupils.
- The school's most-able pupils achieve well at the end of Key Stage 1, particularly in reading and mathematics. By the end of Year 6 pupils have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013 the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics combined was well above the national average.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are well supported through intervention and enrichment programmes and make progress at a similar rate to their peers as a result.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall. Pupils are keen to learn and have excellent relationships with teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- In the Reception class, children settle quickly and develop confidence as they learn both indoors and outside. They are happy and enjoy the different activities provided for them. They benefit from good support and make good progress in the early stages of reading.
- Books are marked regularly, but the quality of marking varies from teacher to teacher. Some teachers use marking exceptionally well to tell pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. This is not consistent practice among all teachers, however.
- Teachers make good use of the school's procedures to track progress to set challenging targets and to check on pupils' progress.
- Teachers ensure that teaching assistants work effectively with individuals and small groups. This helps to ensure that challenging work is provided and most groups of pupils, including those of higher ability, make good progress in their learning.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and provide very good support for pupils of all abilities. They support groups and individuals, both within and outside the classroom. The support they provide for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is particularly effective.
- The teaching of writing in some years is not as effective at ensuring that pupils make the rapid progress they do in Years 5 and 6.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is a school where pupils learn and play together well. They care for each other and behave well in lessons. During this inspection, the pupils showed excellent manners and were courteous at all times.
- Feedback from staff, parents and pupils indicates that behaviour at school is good. This is supported by the school's behaviour log which shows that misbehaviour, including bullying, is rare. When incidents have occurred, prompt and effective action has been taken, including contact with parents where necessary.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils understand about the different types of bullying but say that bullying rarely occurs at the school and when it does it is dealt with effectively. Those pupils spoken to during this inspection knew how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
- Pupils' attendance has improved recently and is now higher than the national average.

- In the large majority of lessons, pupils work hard and persevere to complete their tasks. On occasions, when teaching is less interesting, pupils lose focus and the pace of their learning slows.

The leadership and management are good

- The school is led and managed well. The headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure the school runs well and maintain a safe, caring and purposeful learning environment.
- School leaders ensure that there is good provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They also ensure that other pupils in danger of falling behind, including those who are supported through the pupil premium, receive appropriate support.
- Senior leaders are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. They check on the quality of teaching regularly through lesson observations and by looking at teachers' planning and the quality of pupils' work. They hold teachers to account for how well their pupils are doing and set challenging targets for improvement.
- The school provides a broad and balanced range of subjects with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. A range of activities outside of lessons is also provided, including residential trips and sporting events with local schools.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is a strength of the school. It helps pupils to develop confidence and empathy and grow into caring young people.
- The school is making good use of the primary sports funding. A specialist physical education teacher has been employed to work with all classes on a weekly basis and provide professional development for teachers. The headteacher believes that this has led to improved teaching. The funding has been used to provide an additional swimming teacher.
- Performance management of teachers is well established. There is a direct link between teachers' salaries and pupils' performance, which is monitored by governors. There are good opportunities for teachers to attend training in order to develop professionally.
- The local authority judges the school to be good. It provides light-touch support and recently carried out a useful external review of the school's effectiveness.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are fully met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors play an active role in school life. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to senior leaders. They make regular checks on the progress of the school's improvement plan through attendance at meetings and the reports they receive from the headteacher. They are well informed about the progress pupils are making and understand how the school tracks achievement across the school. As a result, they know how well the school is doing and understand how the school's performance can be improved.
- Governors maintain a close overview of the school's finances, including how staff are rewarded. They hold senior leaders to account for the spending of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and primary school sports funding. Safeguarding practices are well documented and meet statutory requirements.

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	115110
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	440538

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	85
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy King
Headteacher	Caroline Shingleton
Date of previous school inspection	17 February 2011
Telephone number	01371 850220
Fax number	01371 851200
Email address	admin@wethersfield.essex.sch.uk

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