

Wallands Community Primary School

Gundreda Road, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1PU

Inspection dates 1–2 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in reading and writing are particularly high.
- Teachers have high expectations of all groups of pupils and plan work that builds effectively on what they have learned before.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are highly enthusiastic learners who develop a very mature understanding of individual responsibilities and respect the rights of others.
- The school is exceptionally harmonious and its work in the local community is impressive.
- Pupils in the language unit receive excellent teaching. As a result, they make rapid progress and are very well equipped for life beyond Wallands.
- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and inspires staff, pupils and parents to share her vision.
- Checks on the quality of teaching by leaders have ironed out most of the inconsistencies in teaching.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in all areas of learning. This is because the whole staff team plans exciting activities that take account of children's interests and individual needs.
- The governing body has a thorough knowledge of the school and provides both challenge and support for senior leaders to ensure improvement.
- Meticulous procedures are in place to ensure pupils are kept safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few inconsistencies in the teaching of mathematics remain. This results in slower progress for some pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4.
- Marking in mathematics is not as thorough as it is in English. Teachers do not always show pupils how to improve or give them enough time to correct their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited every class to observe teaching and learning. A number of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also carried out shorter visits and walks around the school to gather information about the range of subjects, behaviour and safety and pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- They looked at a wide range of pupils’ books in English, mathematics and topic work, including books from the previous school year. They talked to two groups of pupils, as well as hearing pupils read in Years 2, 4 and 6.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, the extended schools coordinator, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documentation, including records of pupils’ progress, including case studies of individual pupils and records of pupils’ progress in each year group; information about pupils’ behaviour and attendance over time; and the school’s development plan and its self-evaluation documents.
- Inspectors took into account the 109 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire, as well as the school’s most recent parent questionnaire, and four letters that parents sent to the inspection team. They also reviewed 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Carole Skinner, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Fiona Robinson	Additional Inspector
David Boreham	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There is one Nursery class. Most of these children move on to Reception and the school draws the rest of its intake from a number of independent nursery providers.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a very small minority from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school provides a speech and language unit for 16 primary-aged pupils from across East Sussex. All these pupils have statements for specific speech and language needs which cannot be met in mainstream schools. As well as receiving specialist help in the unit, these pupils are also integrated into mainstream classes for some lessons.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This additional government funding is used to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved a number of awards, including a Gold Artsmark, International Schools status and a national award from the Shine a Light Communication Trust in recognition of its work in speech, language and communication. The school has achieved the UNICEF Rights Respecting level 2 award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils make consistently rapid progress in mathematics, especially the most able pupils and those in Years 3 and 4, by:
 - marking their work in a way that shows them how to master new ideas and correct errors
 - giving pupils time to follow up on marking and consolidate whatever they are unsure of
 - making the most of opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills within the topics and themes that incorporate most other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has created a strong senior team who share her commitment to making Wallands an outstanding school. They ensure that the staff team is as strong as possible, especially when temporary replacements are required, through a stringent selection process.
- Building on this foundation, leaders review and assess the quality of teaching regularly. They provide teachers with clear guidance to improve their practice and to ensure high expectations across the school.
- Leaders set challenging targets for teachers which measure how well they enable pupils to make progress. This informs decisions about salary increases and ensures that effective teachers progress in their career.
- Training for all staff is well planned and enhanced by close links with a local university. In addition, teachers coach each other, for example through 'lesson study' approaches, which promotes good practice and sharing of ideas.
- Leaders also evaluate the performance of non-teaching staff, ensuring that all feel equally valued and that the school strives for the highest standards in all aspects of its work.
- Middle leaders are having a positive impact on improving provision in their subjects. Leaders are supporting them well to develop their skills in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching.
- The school is well prepared for the national changes to the primary curriculum. Teachers have worked together effectively to create a way of integrating all subjects into termly topics and themes, with a chosen book at the heart of each one. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge across all subjects.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain through the topics and themes they study, residential trips and a wide variety of visits and outside speakers that enrich learning. Pupils benefit greatly from the extensive range of clubs and activities that promote high standards in sport, music and the arts and enhance pupils' social and cultural development.
- The leadership of the language unit is outstanding. Leaders ensure that every pupil's needs are met through a variety of meticulously planned experiences and by staff who have high levels of skills and expertise. The school's work with families who have been unsuccessful in gaining a place in the unit is another excellent feature of this provision.
- Throughout the school, including the language unit, leaders track pupils' progress carefully and can explain the individual circumstances that may have affected their learning. They discuss any concerns with teachers and take swift action to address any shortcomings or to suggest alternative ways of working.
- The school uses sports premium funding very effectively. The extended schools coordinator plays a key role in organising the extensive range of activities on offer, as well as signposting pupils to specialist clubs, such as sailing and squash. Specialist teachers and coaches have helped to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Records show that more pupils are taking up different sports than the previous year. Pupils' recent competition successes include athletics, football, swimming, table tennis and netball.
- Leaders make effective use of additional government funding to help eligible pupils make faster progress. As well as providing targeted support for learning, the school ensures that these pupils are able to take part in all activities, including residential trips, to support their all-round development. This has had a good impact on helping pupils catch up with their peers nationally.
- One of the school's greatest strengths is its work to promote equality and celebrate diversity, both within school and through a wide range of community events. The popular 'Wallandsfest' camping weekend brings parents from all walks of life together, and staff, pupils and parents spent time together in the Easter holidays to stage an outdoor performance of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.
- Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally rigorous and fully meet current requirements.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this effective school and is committed to supporting the school in its ambition to become outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has a good strategic overview of the school, knows its strengths and is well aware of what needs to be improved. Governors check information about pupils' achievement rigorously, know how it compares with similar schools, and use this to challenge leaders to improve further. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching throughout the school and how this is evaluated and take account of teachers' performance when making decisions about salary increases. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and keep a close eye on how things are progressing from term to term. Governors are rigorous in their oversight of the school's finances, especially the use and impact of additional government funding. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are rigorous and attend all relevant training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Most are highly motivated learners who concentrate very well and apply themselves wholeheartedly to everything they do.
- Pupils generally behave exceptionally well around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. Consistently implemented strategies and sanctions ensure that pupils know exactly what is expected of them, and act accordingly. Records show that what was seen during the inspection is typical – and pupils were quick to point out to inspectors that disruption of any kind is rare.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in the rise in attendance rates to above average levels. The very few exclusions indicate how effective the school is in helping pupils to improve their behaviour.
- Pupils know and refer to the class charter and fully understand the importance of respecting the rights of others. They take on responsibilities willingly and are courteous towards adults. They help to keep the school tidy and take a pride in their work.
- The development of pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is excellent. Staff ensure that pupils get on exceptionally well with each other, respecting differences and helping those who need it. They learn the importance of tolerance and that discrimination of any kind is unacceptable.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Procedures for keeping pupils safe in lessons, when moving around school and at playtimes are very thorough. For example, when pupils move to different classes for their weekly 'family group' debates, teachers call a register to make sure no one is missing and always investigate if pupils have not arrived.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying and report that it is rare. They know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet because the school teaches e-safety as a priority and includes parents in this.
- Younger pupils learn about road safety and older pupils have the opportunity to learn how to ride a bicycle safely.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire say that their child feels safe and all agree that their child is happy at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers generally have high expectations of all pupils, whatever their starting points. They plan tasks for different groups that stimulate pupils' curiosity, consolidate previous learning and deepen pupils' understanding of new ideas.
- High expectations of pupils' behaviour ensure that lessons get off to a prompt start and run smoothly. Classroom relationships are excellent.
- Teaching in the language unit is outstanding because skilled teachers, assistants, learning mentors and therapists, who are all specialists in the field, work closely together to plan, assess and review pupils' learning.
- Teachers' discussions with senior leaders about individual pupils' progress lead to well-matched interventions where necessary to help pupils overcome specific difficulties.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make), reading and writing is based effectively on well thought out approaches, which are applied across the school. This ensures pupils make good progress in their learning from year to year.
- The teaching of mathematics has a few inconsistencies that hinder pupils from making consistently rapid progress across Key Stage 2. This is partly because pupils do not have enough regular opportunities to use and apply their learning in a variety of ways across different subjects.
- Pupils' English books show that teachers mark work thoroughly, often giving pupils advice on how to improve their writing. However, in mathematics, marking is less detailed and tends to show only right and wrong answers. On some occasions, teachers ask pupils to go back and check or practise a particular skill, but books show that teachers and pupils do not always follow this up.
- Across the school, teachers and assistants move learning on through carefully phrased questions that

make pupils think for themselves. They often challenge pupils to explain their ideas more fully and this helps them to clarify their thinking and express themselves more clearly.

- Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout sessions and adapt tasks if pupils find them too easy or too hard. They make thorough checks on pupils' progress each term and are quick to identify any who may be falling behind. Where necessary, they liaise with senior staff to arrange additional support which helps pupils to overcome any barriers to their learning.
- Through the school's website and 'life cloud', teachers provide pupils and their families with valuable homework resources and guidance to enable parents to support pupils' learning at home. For example, the 'life cloud' explains the methods teachers use to teach aspects of mathematics.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress in Nursery and Reception and acquire a wide range of knowledge and skills that equip them well for starting Year 1.
- Effective teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) enables pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and spelling. By Year 2, pupils are able to write factual accounts and stories that show good use of language and punctuation.
- In Years 3 to 6, consistently good and, for some pupils, outstanding progress in reading and writing results in well above average attainment by the end of Year 6. However, progress in mathematics is not as rapid in Years 3 and 4 as it is in Years 5 and 6. The school has rightly identified this as its main priority for improvement in 2014/15.
- The most able pupils attain very high standards. Their writing shows flair and maturity and they express their ideas using a wide variety of language in imaginative ways.
- In 2013, eight gifted mathematicians achieved Level 6 in mathematics, (typical of Year 7 in secondary school). Nevertheless, leaders have set a target to increase the number of pupils who reach the higher levels in mathematics.
- Pupils are avid readers and talk about their favourite books with enthusiasm. Teachers plan each term's topics and themes skilfully around a text and this helps to extend pupils' appreciation and understanding of literature.
- Teachers and assistants provide support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs which is planned carefully to help them overcome any difficulties with learning. As a result, they make good and sometimes outstanding progress and many reach the levels expected of 11-year-olds by the time they leave.
- Pupils in the language unit make exceptionally good progress as a result of high quality teaching, personalised support and excellent partnerships with a range of external agencies.
- The school uses additional government funding effectively to boost the progress of eligible pupils in all areas of learning. The most recent validated national figures show that in 2013, pupils were about five months behind their peers nationally in mathematics, having been almost 24 months behind in 2012. In writing, the gap narrowed from 18 months to 10 months over the same period. There were similarly significant improvements in the attainment of eligible pupils in mathematics and writing, when compared to others within the school. Gaps in reading remained at similar levels in 2012 and 2013, but school records and pupils' work show that eligible pupils make good progress.
- Pupils achieve high standards in physical education and sport and are very successful in a wide range of sports competitions. Work in books and around the school shows that pupils also achieve well in other subjects, including art, geography and history.

The early years provision is good

- Most children enter the Reception classes with skills that are typical for their age. Children in the Nursery settle very quickly and good teaching of the basic skills ensures they are confident learners.
- Children make good progress in acquiring basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics in the Reception classes. Their personal, social and emotional development is particularly good, as was seen in the way children explored a wide variety of learning activities with confidence and curiosity. Their attainment is above average by the end of the Reception Year.
- Teachers plan an exciting range of activities that capture children's interest and take account of their individual needs. They have greatly improved the outdoor facilities for Nursery children since the last inspection by moving the whole Nursery to a different part of the school. Reception children also share

this extensive outdoor learning experience which greatly enhances their knowledge of the world around them.

- Children enjoy exploring and find things out for themselves, as when some were investigating the different smells they could create by mixing ingredients together.
- Teachers and teaching assistants develop learning effectively through questioning, as when a teacher encouraged a small group of girls to order the numbers 1 to 10 correctly on a 'washing line'.
- Children behave exceptionally well and are polite and courteous. Adults take great care to ensure their safety, particularly when negotiating the steps to and from the Nursery.
- The early years leader is a skilled practitioner who knows what is working well and what needs to be improved. She is currently working to strengthen the systems for establishing children's attainment on entry when they arrive from other nurseries and those for tracking their progress throughout Reception.

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	114405
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	444239

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	474
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Scott
Headteacher	Debbie Gordon
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 May 2011
Telephone number	01273 472775
Fax number	01273 486172
Email address	head@wallandscp.e-sussex.sch.uk

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