

# Wheatfields Primary School

Nene Way, St Ives, Cambridgeshire, PE27 3WF

## Inspection dates

22–23 November 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in their knowledge of letters and sounds, numbers and writing.
- Pupils achieve well to reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6, and the attainment of more-able pupils is high in English, mathematics, art, history and music.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Teachers' expectations are generally high and they have very positive relationships with their pupils.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe and say that they enjoy school.
- The school does a great deal to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- The headteacher, governing body and other senior leaders are ambitious for the school and work together well to improve teaching and to raise achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Years 1 to 4, teachers do not always provide exactly the right level of challenge for different groups of pupils, or give them enough to do.
- Not all marking provides equally clear guidance to pupils and, in mathematics, teachers do not always check individual pupils' understanding when questioning the whole class.
- Not enough checks are made on the progress of different groups of pupils to ensure that support is helping to raise their attainment.
- The governing body does not hold leaders closely to account for the spending of pupil premium funding.

## Information about this inspection

- Twenty-seven lessons were visited, three assemblies were observed and four pupils in Years 1 and 2 read their books to an inspector.
- The inspection team spent a considerable amount of time sampling pupils' exercise books in Years 1 to 6 and looked at children's work and records in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority and with a consultant who works regularly with the school.
- A group of pupils met with an inspector and there were several informal discussions with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors took account of the 56 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and talked informally with parents and carers during the inspection. Questionnaires from 27 members of staff were analysed.
- Documents scrutinised during the inspection included the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, performance data and the tracking of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors also looked at records relating to aspects of behaviour, teachers' planning and the systems used for assessment.

## Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector
Alan Radford	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Wheatfields Primary is bigger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British origin, and the percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding allocated by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, who are looked after by the local authority or have parents in the Armed Forces) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- An infant and junior school were amalgamated to form Wheatfields Primary just before the last inspection. The amalgamation and a fall in the number of pupils on roll have led to staff redundancies in recent years, and the school has also experienced long-term staff absence.

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

- Increase the amount of teaching that is outstanding and raise pupils' achievement, especially in Years 1 to 4, by:
  - making sure that teachers always provide tasks with exactly the right level of challenge for all groups of pupils
  - ensuring learning moves on at a suitably brisk pace and that teachers give pupils enough tasks to keep them working hard throughout the lesson
  - checking the understanding of less-able pupils when questioning the whole class in mathematics
  - making sure that teachers' marking in all classes provides pupils with clear information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
  - ensuring that, when leaders check on teachers' work, they concentrate specifically on these points.
- Strengthen the leadership of teaching by:
  - sharpening the analysis of data to keep a continuous check on how much progress different groups of pupils are making, especially those who are supported through the pupil premium
  - ensuring leaders of subjects, the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers take greater responsibility for checking pupils' progress at least termly.
- Improve governance by ensuring:
  - all governors know how to analyse data to compare pupils' performance with that of schools nationally
  - governors hold leaders more closely to account for the spending of pupil premium funding.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment that is broadly in line with expectations for their age, though some have more limited social skills and are only just beginning to develop the physical control needed for writing. During their time in Reception, children make good progress, especially in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, and move up to Year 1 with attainment that exceeds national expectations.
- Results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are generally significantly above average and pupils' progress is good in reading, writing and mathematics. Nearly all pupils make at least the expected amount of progress at both key stages, and a number of more-able pupils made exceptional progress last year, some reaching Level 6 in mathematics.
- At Key Stage 1, the small number of pupils supported through pupil premium funding reached higher standards than similar pupils nationally in 2012. At Key Stage 2, these pupils and some less-able pupils did not do so well, particularly in mathematics, and this caused the school's overall results to dip to broadly average. Achievement is set to rise as standards are above average and progress is outstanding for many pupils in Years 5 and 6. Progress is not as consistently fast, however, in Years 1 to 4.
- Pupil premium funding is appropriately spent on providing extra support in literacy and numeracy and developing pupils' social skills. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their classmates but records do not make clear how far any gaps in their achievement are narrowing.
- Throughout the school, pupils have good opportunities to extend their literacy skills through topics that span different subjects. Pupils produce some high quality work, as seen in a piece of writing by a girl in Year 5 on the theme of 'evacuees': 'Bombs falling, ghostly smoke, more houses destroyed, the dreadful drone echoed through the shadowy city, rushing through the fearful crowds, determined to get to safety before thousands of shining stars dived down, eager to collect all our smiles and happiness...'

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers establish a positive atmosphere for learning in their classrooms and pupils find lessons interesting. Activities are varied, and the teaching of communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills is good.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, good teaching is based on careful planning and checking of children's progress, strong teamwork and careful attention to children's individual needs. Staff are skilled in questioning children and provide plenty of opportunity for them to develop their basic skills.
- There are many examples of outstanding teaching across the school, particularly in Years 5 and 6. In these lessons, teachers have very high expectations, plan activities precisely and use their exceptionally good questioning skills to probe pupils' thinking. This results in pupils making rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge is evident not only in their accurate teaching of phonics (the

sounds that letters make) and mathematics, but in the good quality work pupils produce in other subjects. The quality of pupils' two- and three-dimensional artwork and the very imaginative work they produce in history shows how well they have been taught and how much teachers have fired them with enthusiasm.

- Marking is generally good with most teachers informing pupils about how well they have done and exactly what they need to do to improve. At times, however, marking praises pupils rather than offering them the clear guidance they need.
- There remain shortcomings in some lessons. While teachers generally make good use of interactive whiteboards to support the teaching of new ideas, they do not always make full use of practical equipment to support learning in mathematics. On occasion, when questioning the whole class, teachers do not get individual pupils to write their answers on small whiteboards to show how much they understand.
- Teachers do not always give different groups of pupils tasks that offer a sufficiently different level of challenge. At times, when pupils complete work quickly, they have little to do for parts of the lesson.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have clear individual targets and generally receive good support from teaching assistants. This enables them to succeed with tasks matched or adapted well to the next steps in their learning.

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

- Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils enjoy school, show enthusiasm for learning, concentrate well and work well both independently and in groups. Pupils, parents and carers all confirm that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are kept safe at school and say that the school is a friendly place where people get on well with one another. They understand the importance of keeping themselves safe in and beyond the school and say that bullying, including cyber-bullying, rarely occurs in school. This is confirmed by the school's records. 'Anti-bullying week' was taking place during the inspection and this provided pupils with many opportunities to consider how best to relate to others and what to do should bullying occur.
- The school supports pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and those with behavioural and emotional difficulties, exceptionally well. The two inclusion managers contribute significantly to the school's efforts to meet their needs, liaising closely with families and other agencies, and the before- and after-school clubs and lunchtime nurture group provide further support.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on responsibilities, as members of the school council, as 'buddies', raising funds for good causes and in work to save the environment. Attendance is average but improving.

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

- The headteacher is dedicated to the school and well supported by governors, and has coped effectively with the challenges caused by the amalgamation. He is passionate about providing primary-aged pupils with the experience of high quality teaching and developing in them a love

for learning. By locating the best teaching in Years 5 and 6 and reorganising the groupings for English and mathematics, he has successfully addressed the recent dip in test results at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are once again above average and more pupils are having the opportunity to excel.

- Decisions about teachers' pay are based on thorough consideration of their performance. Senior leaders hold teachers to account through termly meetings that review the progress of individual pupils. This ensures that those who need extra help are identified and support is put in place to enable them to succeed, and the school 'goes the extra mile' to ensure no pupil is discriminated against.
- Although the school analyses data about the achievement of individual pupils carefully, the need for the headteacher and other senior leaders to undertake a good deal of class teaching has limited the attention given to the progress of different groups, including those who receive support through pupil premium funding. The school does not present its data in a way that shows clearly how well classes and groups are doing. Teachers, including those with responsibility for subjects and for special educational needs, make less use of data than they should despite evidence of some good support to their colleagues in other ways.
- Exciting work on display around the school shows how well subjects and topics promote pupils' learning. From the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards, children learn Italian. Pupils have opportunities to study topics in depth and visits, visitors and residential trips enrich their learning.
- After-school clubs are well attended and cover a range of activities and contribute to the school's good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Musical events receive a high profile and are of very good quality.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for the school, supplemented by the work of a consultant. This has focused particularly on supporting leadership and management and raising achievement in mathematics.

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

- Governors are closely involved in the life of the school and the Chair of the Governing Body and other experienced governors have a good knowledge of its work. Governors receive very detailed information about performance management and are closely involved in decisions about teachers' salary progression. This gives them insight into the quality of teaching, and they know its strengths and scope for improvement. They ensure that the school's budget is tightly managed and know how the pupil premium money is spent. They are satisfied that its spending is appropriate but they do not hold leaders to account for the effect of the spending on pupils' progress. Not all governors yet have the skills to analyse pupils' results for themselves and, thereby, identify where improvements could be made. The governing body places strong emphasis on ensuring that the school fully meets requirements for safeguarding.

## 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>	131197
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403625

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	397
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Duncan Woodall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Marshall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 November 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01480 466919
<b>Fax number</b>	01480 498248
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