

Great Wakering Primary School

High Street, Great Wakering, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 0EJ

Inspection dates 6–7 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The proportion of good teaching, although much improved, is not yet high enough to ensure that pupils' learning is consistently good.
- Pupils' progress in writing, and to an extent in mathematics, is not yet sufficiently consistent to compensate fully for past underperformance in these subjects.
- Pupils' work is not always neat enough and some of the marking does not make clear what pupils need to do to improve.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are cared for well. They are proud of their school, feel safe and are well behaved.
- The teaching of reading is effective across the school and progress is good.
- Children in Reception get a good start and make good progress as a result of good teaching and an engaging curriculum.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is managed well.
- The school has strong links with its community and with other schools. Provision for sport and extended activities is good.
- The headteacher has done a great deal to secure significant improvements in teaching and in the progress pupils make.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, of which 12 were joint observations with the school’s senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, with the Chair and former Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, with the school’s middle and senior leaders, and, by telephone, with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 52 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of school documentation, including records of the monitoring of teaching, the school improvement plan, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, and extracts from the school’s tracking of pupils’ progress. A scrutiny of pupils’ written work was also undertaken and inspectors listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Lafford

Additional Inspector

Joanna Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Great Waking is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has gained a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools award, the Activemark and the award for Quality in Extended Schools provision.
- The school provides onsite breakfast and after-school clubs. These are managed by the governing body and formed part of the current inspection.
- There is a children's centre on the school site. This is inspected separately.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2010.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching enables pupils to make consistently good progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by:
 - providing well-paced, stimulating activities which challenge pupils of all abilities
 - securing consistency and accuracy in the assessment of pupils' understanding of what is being taught
 - making sure that all staff have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their written work
 - improving further teachers' marking so that pupils in all classes always know what they need to do to make their work better
 - promoting pupils' learning through the creative use of information and communication technology.
- Ensure that pupils achieve well in writing and mathematics, and their progress is at least at the expected level year on year, by:
 - making sure that staff are confident and accurate in their ongoing assessment of pupils' skills in writing and mathematics
 - providing frequent planned opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical and writing skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils do not yet make consistently good progress. Attainment is broadly average at Year 2. On a three-year upward trend, attainment is now broadly average at Year 6. There is a heritage of pupils making insufficient progress over time. Inaccurate assessment of pupils' attainment at Year 2 prior to 2010 has made it difficult accurately to evaluate the full extent of pupils' past progress. Recent, more accurate assessment shows much improved progress since 2010. While there are still inconsistencies, for example, in Years 1 and 2, and in writing across the school, progress has improved overall. Most pupils now make the expected progress in Years 3 to 6, with some exceeding expectation, particularly in reading.
- Children enter Reception with skills slightly below those expected, particularly in aspects of language. Progress in Reception is good and, by the end of the year, standards are slightly above average. Children are particularly skilled in linking sounds and letters (phonics). The teaching is challenging and the curriculum offers engaging learning opportunities.
- Reading is taught well and progress is improving. As a result, progress is mostly good through the school and pupils' attainment continues to rise.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who need extra help has also been uneven. The school has radically reorganised the provision. More rigorous leadership, improved identification of needs, more systematic evaluation of different teaching approaches, effective training for teaching assistants and greater accountability for the progress pupils make are together promoting better progress.
- The pupil premium last year funded additional support for identified older pupils in receipt of free school meals. As a result, these pupils made broadly expected progress in English and mathematics. Other monies were used to subsidise breakfast club provision. This contributed to the steadily rising attendance and better punctuality. The funding of a Family Support Worker, providing additional help for individual pupils with identified needs, has proved effective in tackling weaknesses in their basic skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, learning has been erratic because there has not been enough good teaching. Much has been done, supported through the performance management procedures, to raise teachers' expectations and to improve their skills.
- There are inconsistencies in the way teachers assess how well pupils are doing. This has improved significantly, but there is more to do in the assessment of writing. There is some use of individual targets in literacy and numeracy, and of self-assessment by pupils. Teachers' marking is more rigorous, and pupils receive clear guidance about the next steps in their learning, although some pockets of weaker marking remain.
- Pupils' written work indicates significant weaknesses in handwriting and presentation. The school has implemented a programme to improve handwriting. Some staff still accept untidy work. This has contributed to some pupils making limited progress. The impact of an initiative to allow pupils to write at length has been partly lost as some staff do not mark pupils' extended writing rigorously enough.

- The proportion of good teaching, other than in the teaching of reading, is lowest in Years 1 and 2. Activities sometimes have limited pace and challenge. Assessment in those years is not always rigorous enough to ensure that subsequent activities really take pupils' learning on.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers match work closely to pupils' different abilities and try to capture their interest, so that pupils are engaged by their learning. This was evident in a lesson in Year 6, where pupils' ideas for writing were based around the completion of a 'blog' detailing the lack of skills of a clown. In a successful English lesson in Year 2, pupils were engrossed in their writing, sustained attention and showed skill in evaluating their work. Limited use is made of information and communication technology to extend pupils' learning.
- School leaders have recently evaluated the skills of support staff to ensure that they are appropriately deployed. The impact of their work is closely monitored. This is contributing to pupils' improving progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons. Where teaching is stimulating, pupils are well motivated and keen to learn. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's expectations. Almost all parents and carers who expressed a view feel that behaviour is good.
- School records show that there have been no exclusions for at least two years. Pupils respect the school's ethos and values, and have few concerns about the behaviour of others. No racist incidents have been recorded. Episodes of inappropriate behaviour or of disruption to lessons are infrequent. If incidents occur, well-established procedures ensure that they are managed effectively. Supervisors at breaks and at lunchtime are vigilant and effectively deployed.
- The school provides well for pupils with a range of behavioural and learning needs. Senior leaders work hard to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.
- Allegations of bullying are rare. Pupils have some awareness that bullying may take different forms, such as internet bullying or because of their gender. Pupils feel that adults are readily approachable and that any difficulties would be dealt with quickly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of risk. This is supported by the school's input on personal safety, particularly on road safety, fire safety and e-safety. Pupils understand how they should behave in order to keep themselves safe.
- Both the before-and after-school clubs provide good-quality extended care for pupils who require this facility.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. There is still a stubborn pocket of persistent absence which the school is tackling. However, access to low-cost, but good value, breakfast club provision has contributed to improved attendance and punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher inherited a school at a very low point. The lack of continuity in leadership and concerns about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress had contributed to low morale and declining outcomes. The headteacher's determination and commitment have underpinned the wide-ranging improvements achieved in the last two years. The school has developed further its

existing strong community links.

- Staff morale is high and leaders at all levels are highly committed. Senior leaders are determined to tackle underperformance rigorously. Leadership functions have been distributed so that middle leaders (those in charge of subjects or parts of the school) in particular feel more empowered. All senior and middle leaders teach well.
- Checks on how well things are working are comprehensive. The school's judgements about how good it is are accurate; senior leaders know exactly where improvements are needed.
- The evaluation of staff performance is closely linked to rigorous discussions around how well pupils are doing. School leaders can demonstrate considerable improvements in the practice of most staff. Decisions about whether staff are to be paid more are now firmly linked to pupils' progress. Opportunities for staff training are good.
- The school has received appropriate support from its local authority. Significant staff changes have contributed to the improved provision. Recent impact, current actions, and a well-founded programme for improvement all indicate that the school has good capacity to improve.
- Priority has been given to improving the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Other subjects are taught through topics and themes. The school recognises that there is some variability in pupils' experience of history, geography and science, although other activities and events, particularly art and music, also engage pupils' interest well. There is some evidence of pupils developing mathematical and writing skills in other subjects. Information and communication technology makes a limited contribution to learning. Pupils have good opportunities to extend their learning through after-school activities. Competitive sport is a strong feature.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is supported well through collective worship. The promotion of cultural awareness through the curriculum is well developed, although there are few established links in the United Kingdom or internationally.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - There have been significant and beneficial changes in the membership of the governing body. Governors now have a clear perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of its overall effectiveness. They recognise the school's past vulnerability, but are able and ready to challenge its performance. Governors now understand the quality of teaching and are aware of the need to ensure that pay and promotion are rigorously aligned to teachers' effectiveness. Governors undertake regular training. They are aware of their responsibilities, along with other leaders and staff, to ensure equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination. They have been involved in decisions relating to the use of pupil premium funding and in analysing its impact on pupils' learning and progress. As a result, they are aware that this additional funding is helping eligible pupils to adjust to school life and to make better progress. Governors also ensure, along with senior leaders, that safeguarding arrangements meet 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	114792
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	401465

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	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Puddick
Headteacher	Hayley O'Dea
Date of previous school inspection	14 December 2009
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