

# The Weatheralls Primary School

Pratt Street, Soham, CB7 5BH

## Inspection dates

12–13 December 2012

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- School leaders have not brought rapid enough improvement to teaching and other aspects of the school and so pupils make no better than adequate progress across Years 1 to 6.
- Boys make slower progress than girls in writing and their attainment is lower by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils do not make fast enough progress in mathematics. This is because not all teachers are confident in teaching the subject and too much time is spent repeating basic skills.
- Teachers' marking does not always give pupils clear guidance about how to improve their work so pupils do not aim high enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress and have a positive start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes because teaching is good and activities interesting.
- Basic reading skills are taught well, following changes in the way lessons are organised.
- The headteacher and school leaders have eliminated inadequate teaching.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well and try hard in lessons. They are responding well to the new 'Good to be Green' system for rewarding good behaviour.
- Staff and governors make sure pupils are taken care of so that they feel safe in school, including during the current building work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body including the Chair and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 26 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also of a recent survey of parents undertaken by the school.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on the pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Beale, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marian Marks	Additional Inspector
Cecelia Davies	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- Pupil numbers are rising in this already larger than the average-sized primary school as building work takes place to expand it to three forms of entry.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language, although there has been a slight increase in the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in recent years.
- A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for funding through the pupil premium (which is extra money given to schools for pupils in local authority care, from Forces families and who are known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly average as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and three Reception classes.
- The Children's Centre on the school site includes pre-school provision, although this is inspected separately.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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

- School leaders should bring greater urgency to the drive to improve teaching so that all pupils make good progress by:
  - setting more challenging goals for pupils
  - ensuring that more-able pupils are given more difficult work in order to reach higher levels
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn from each other by sharing their ideas
  - developing teachers' marking so that it supports better learning.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
  - developing the skills and expertise of all staff in teaching mathematics
  - reducing the amount of repetition of basic skills and providing more opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems in their everyday work.
- Increase the progress of boys in writing and close the gap between their attainment and that of girls by:
  - building opportunities for writing into planning for each topic
  - making sure that pupils can discuss their writing so they can help each other to improve
  - setting pupils clear targets that are focused on how to improve their writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children reach broadly average levels by the time they enter Year 1, from skills below those expected for their age on entry to the Nursery. However, their good rates of progress in the Nursery and Reception classes are not sustained in Years 1 to 6. Improvements are taking place and previously uneven progress is being smoothed out through better teaching. Where past underachievement has been identified, such as in the current Year 5, good teaching is already leading to rapid improvements.
- The new approach to teaching calculation and the mental arithmetic programme are starting to give pupils more confidence when working with numbers. However, there is too much repeated teaching of basic skills without pupils having the opportunity to see how mathematics can be applied to solving real-life problems.
- School leaders have been taking action to close the gap between boys and girls in writing. Boys have responded well to the opportunity to plan and develop extended pieces of writing over a period of time, but they rarely have the chance to talk through their ideas with others. Furthermore too many worksheets are used in topics. This limits the pupils' opportunities to write creatively.
- Attainment was slightly below that seen nationally in the Year 1 tests on pupils' use of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). This caused leaders to make changes to teaching in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are now making good progress and those who failed to meet the required standard are catching up quickly in Year 2. Other reading skills, such as comprehension, develop well so that attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading is now rising.
- Pupils attracting pupil premium funding are making accelerated progress, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. This is enabling these pupils to close gaps that emerged at Key Stage 1 between their attainment and national expectations. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make expected progress, but it is more rapid in reading than in writing or mathematics because of the focus placed by teachers and support staff on helping them to develop basic skills.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is only consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 5. There are examples of effective teaching in all other year groups, but some variability which leads to pupils in some classes making only adequate progress.
- Where teaching is only adequate, particularly in mathematics, teachers do not expect enough of pupils. Often, teachers give lengthy explanations and do not push pupils on quickly enough. Teachers do not regularly give pupils the chance to learn from each other by sharing ideas, for example by reading out what they are writing before redrafting.
- At its best, marking aids learning by giving clear advice about how work can be improved and providing time for pupils to respond. However, this practice is far from universal and in many classes marking offers little help to pupils. Individual targets showing how to move to the next level are not used by pupils and are not used at times by teachers in their lesson planning.
- The most effective teaching is characterised by high expectations and challenge that drive

learning forward at pace. Teaching is enthusiastic and resources used creatively so that the pupils' interest is captured and sustained and new ideas are learnt quickly. Questions are carefully used to check understanding and to challenge pupils to think and respond in detail. Work is well planned to take account of pupils' attainment so that, for example, the most able Year 6 pupils are working in a small group on more advanced secondary school material.

- Strong teamwork is a feature of successful teaching in the Nursery and Reception. Close links with home and thorough assessments enable adults to provide activities that take account of the children's interests. Weaknesses in literacy, particularly for boys, are tackled successfully because language development is a focus at all times and activities are provided specifically to attract boys.
- Support staff are deployed well and make a major contribution to the pupils' learning, both in lessons or when leading sessions to help them catch up in reading. They also manage pupils with behavioural needs well so that they can continue learning and do not disturb others.

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

- Everyone in the staff team shares a common approach to managing behaviour. This means that pupils understand what is expected of them. Pupils are keen not to lose their much valued 'green time' by misbehaving, with less time being lost by pupils across the school as the term has progressed. Inventive methods have been adopted to help pupils, such as 'Special Bear' who moves around the school reminding pupils about the expected standards of behaviour. For example, he reminded Year 3 pupils to keep cloakrooms tidy and respect each other's belongings.
- Pupils say behaviour is good and that they feel safe in school. Their view, supported by school records, is that incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are rare and are often just a case of falling-out between friends. They know precisely who to turn to if they feel concerned. Pupils are taught how to stay safe when using the internet and the school has used the new building to help pupils understand the hazards of building sites and how to cope with them.
- Children develop good learning habits in the Nursery and Reception which stay with them as they move through the school. They learn to share responsibility when working together and usually try to do their best. There is a calm working atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils are keen to do well and only occasionally lose concentration when lessons lack interest.
- Attendance is gradually rising through weekly attendance targets for each class and rewards for the best class attendance. A Polish-speaking teaching assistant has helped to reduce absence for some Polish pupils by contacting their parents and pointing out the need for regular attendance.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The action taken by the headteacher and school leaders is bringing about improvements to teaching and with it, to pupils' progress. However, in the recent past there has not been enough urgency and targets set to raise achievement have not been sufficiently challenging to lead to pupils making better than adequate progress.
- Teachers' performance is now being checked more rigorously and training provided to tackle weaknesses. This includes working alongside the increasing number of good teachers in the

school. Formal procedures for managing performance are used to ensure that only good teaching is rewarded.

- The school's engagement with the local authority is starting to provide challenge and support for leaders to increase the pace of improvement. Recent developments in literacy and numeracy have also benefited from consultant support. The school's partnership with the local secondary school is extending opportunities in music and Year 6 pupils are producing a CD of their singing.
  - The curriculum is improving with subjects increasingly linked into topics, which pupils say they find more interesting as they can follow a theme more deeply and visit places of interest. The most effective topics, such as the First World War in Year 6, use fiction such as *Private Peaceful* to stimulate the pupils' imaginations and provide opportunities to develop their writing. More often, however, opportunities are missed to develop literacy and capture the interest of boys in writing.
  - The school makes adequate provision for the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a clear set of values which pupils try hard to follow. However, provision is not planned coherently across the school and relies on the practice of individual teachers and special events. These include the recent 'Russian Day' where language and arts were studied and so helped to develop the pupils' understanding of the wider world.
  - The needs of individual pupils are carefully identified so that action can be taken where they fall behind their targets. Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional support in school and to subsidise places in the breakfast club for pupils attracting this funding. The latter has led to improved attendance for the pupils concerned and there is evidence of accelerated progress.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties. However, governors' knowledge of the school is not always used to challenge school leaders sufficiently to increase the pace of change. Governors' visits to school to observe learning help them to have a clear understanding of where teaching needs to improve and how this is to be achieved. They are closely involved in planning, both for the school's improvement and to establish how funding is allocated. This means they know how the headteacher rewards good teaching and where pupil premium funding is having an impact. Governors undertake training to keep their skills updated, including in understanding how the school's test and other data compares with national performance.
-

## 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>	110769
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401151

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	547
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chrissy Barclay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01353 720456
<b>Fax number</b>	01353 720456
<b>Email address</b>	office@weatheralls.cambs.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

