

Wessington Primary School

The Green, Wessington, Alfreton, DE55 6DQ

Inspection dates 17–18 January 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Standards are above average in English and mathematics when pupils leave Year 6. Pupils make good progress through the school.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and promote positive relationships in lessons. They give pupils opportunities to work by themselves and in groups. Pupils receive good individual support from teachers and teaching assistants in lessons.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They are exceptionally keen to learn and work extremely well with each other in lessons. Pupils of all ages mix exceedingly well with each other.
- Attendance has improved and is above average.
- Leadership and management, including that of the governing body, are good. Leaders, managers and governors have ensured good teaching has been maintained and pupils have continued to achieve well since the previous inspection.
- Governors have links with the staff holding responsibilities and visit the school regularly. This helps them to know the school well.
- The school has developed good relationships with parents and they are positive about it.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make outstanding progress in enough lessons. Teachers do not always set work at exactly the right level so that more-able pupils find it demanding and less-able pupils are able to complete it.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics. Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise their writing and clear targets to improve it.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or part-lessons and visited three sessions in the afternoon given to creative activities.
- Four observations of lessons were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings took place with members of the governing body, staff, pupils and a local authority representative.
- The seven responses to the online survey, Parent View, were analysed along with responses to the school's own survey. The inspector spoke to parents informally when they attended the achievement assembly. The returns from 13 staff questionnaires were also reviewed.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised: records of pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wessington Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups, is well-below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher provides support to another school in the local authority.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes in the mornings and three mixed-age classes in the afternoons.
- There have been a number of changes in teaching staff since the previous inspection.
- Pupils are educated onsite. There is no alternative educational provision elsewhere.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching where pupils make outstanding progress, especially in writing, by:
 - making sure that the information on pupils' progress and attainment is used to match activities precisely to pupils' abilities, so their work is not too hard or too easy
 - giving pupils more regular opportunities to practise writing and ensuring that marking gives them the precise next steps on how to improve their writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils leave the school with standards in English and mathematics which are above average. They make good progress throughout the school and, in mathematics last year, Year 6 pupils made very rapid progress.
- Standards at Key Stage 1 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The dip in performance in reading and writing in 2011 has been addressed, and standards continued to rise in mathematics. However, pupils do not use their skills as writers across subjects enough to improve their writing as much as they could.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading and read regularly at home. They like to finish their books and get new ones. They have detailed reading logs to record their reading sessions. They understand how to use strategies they have learnt to help them read more difficult words, but some do not apply them without prompting. In the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) screening check, a higher proportion of pupils reached the required standard compared with schools nationally.
- Children enter the school with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. Children moving into Year 1 in 2012 made good progress to reach above national levels in most areas of learning. However, weaknesses remain in communication, language and literacy, particularly in children's writing skills.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive effective additional support in lessons and in small groups. This helps these pupils take a full part in lessons and make good progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for additional funding from the pupil premium have support from teaching assistants in lessons and in small groups if they are at risk of underachieving. They are also given other opportunities to enrich their school lives, such as educational visits. There were no pupils known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium in Year 6 last year, so no national comparison of attainment can be drawn. In the rest of the school, these pupils make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Strengths of teaching in the school are teachers' subject knowledge and the relationships between teachers and pupils in lessons. Teachers have established clear routines in lessons which support learning. There is a good balance between teacher-led parts of lessons and when pupils are given opportunities to talk to their partners about their work, to work in groups or to work independently. Pupils work sensibly and are extremely supportive of each other.
- Pupils' independent learning skills are developed effectively from an early age. For example, in a Reception phonics (the sounds that letters make) session, the teacher worked skilfully with one group while another group worked on an independent activity matching pictures with phrases. Children enjoyed the activity, concentrated on the task and supported each other in working out which pairs of pictures and phrases went together.
- Teachers usually plan different levels of work for different year groups and ability levels. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson, pupils applied their knowledge to word

problems of different levels of difficulty. The teacher circulated, questioning pupils effectively and ensuring they showed their working. Pupils worked well and made good progress.

- Sometimes, teachers do not plan work for different levels of ability, and set the same work for the whole class. This means more-able pupils find the work too easy and are not stretched to progress as well as they could, and less-able pupils find it too difficult.
- The teaching of writing is not as strong as mathematics. Teachers do not always give pupils enough opportunities to develop the skills they have learnt in writing in lessons. Pupils have 'learning ladders' which show them the different levels of writing, but teachers do not always make it clear to pupils from marking their work what exactly pupils need to focus on to improve their writing.
- The school has recently adjusted teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage to give children more opportunities to develop their writing to support their practice of these skills at an early age and to address this area of weakness in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive additional help in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. They ensure that pupils understand the work and support them in completing activities. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, staff questioned pupils well to guide them in their learning so they made good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are exceptionally polite to each other and to adults in the school. They are extremely well behaved and pupils of all ages get on very well with each other. During an indoor break, pupils of all ages played very sensibly together on a range of games. In the 'creativity afternoon' pupils of all ages worked successfully alongside each other. Relationships were very positive and pupils were enormously supportive of each other. Parents are extremely positive about how well pupils of different ages mixed with each other and the 'sense of community' they say this gives the school.
- Pupils say that behaviour in the school is extremely good, and that any incidents of poor behaviour are exceptionally rare. The behaviour log confirms this is the case over time with very few incidents over the last three years. All parents and staff are equally positive about behaviour and say behaviour is well managed in school. The school promotes equality of opportunity and good relations very effectively and ensures discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including verbal, physical and cyber bullying. They say that bullying does not happen and that there are no recent examples. The school bullying log confirms pupils' views are accurate and there have been no recent bullying incidents. Pupils say that, if there was a problem, teachers would deal with it. They say they feel very safe in school. All parents also said their children feel safe in school.
- Attendance has improved and is above average. Pupils enjoy school and are extremely keen to learn and this contributes considerably to their good achievement. Their concentration in lessons is excellent. They work very well together and support each other with their work.
- Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities, including school council, 'ecommittee', 'buddying' younger pupils and a variety of monitor roles. In the achievement assembly, pupils enjoyed hearing why pupils have been given rewards and were enthusiastic about 'stampers' – the pupils rewarded for filling their 'stamper cards' with stamps for good work.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations both of the quality of teaching and of pupils' achievement throughout the school. Procedures for the management of teachers' performance are thorough. Teachers are set improvement targets that link to the school development plan or to teachers' individual responsibilities. Pay awards for teachers are linked to their performance.
- Parents commented on their good relationships with the school. As one parent who summed up the views of others said, 'You're always made to feel very welcome; you always feel you can come into school about anything.'
- The interesting range of subjects taught is extended with enrichment days such as 'Christmas enhancement day' when pupils dress up as elves and the weekly 'creativity afternoon' where pupils undertake activities based on the termly topic. The current topic, 'The Future' is looking at sustainability and pupils enjoyed the opportunity to design and make windmills and taste different kinds of bread.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is developed through their learning of subjects and topics in lessons and assemblies. The school also has links with a school in London and Tanzania, which promote pupils' cultural development.
- The local authority has supported the school effectively with annual reviews and in checking on the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have links with staff and visit the school regularly. They work with senior staff to check directly on areas of school, such as subject leadership, safeguarding and provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Governors understand the data describing pupils' progress and attainment, and know how far pupils' attainment is above that in other schools. They manage the budget well, and know how the pupil premium funding is spent and regularly review the difference this is making to these pupils' achievement. They receive frequent updates on pupils' progress from the headteacher. They are aware of how good teaching is in the school. They make sure that the procedures to manage teachers' performance are rigorous and scrutinise pay recommendations for staff who perform well before signing them off. They are involved in all appointments of staff. Governors receive regular training and keep a record of what training each has had. They ensure safeguarding meets 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	112646
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	403186

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	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cath Pilsbury
Headteacher	Victoria Cousins
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2008
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