

West Horndon Primary School

Thorndon Avenue, West Horndon, Brentwood, CM13 3TR

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils' progress is good from the Reception class to Year 6 because their basic skills are developed well.
- Good teaching in all age groups makes sure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Nearly all parents would recommend the school. One summed up their thoughts by saying, 'The passion that spills from the teachers into children is priceless and obvious for all to see.'
- Older pupils work very successfully with younger pupils through a wide variety of practical projects during the 'Wednesday of Wonders' sessions.
- Pupils are extremely polite and behave very well because care and support from staff are excellent.
- Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe when they are using equipment.
- The good leadership of the headteacher means that all staff are working energetically to improve the school, and have made it an exciting place for pupils to learn in the classroom and outside areas such as the school's woodland.
- Leaders, governors and staff have worked carefully to improve the quality of teaching, and check on pupils' progress regularly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few teachers do not always make enough use of pupils' individual learning targets to focus the help and guidance they provide.
- The targets set for improving teachers' performance are not recorded in enough detail, so they are not always totally sure what they are aiming for.
- Parents are not always clear about how much progress their child is making, and do not fully understand how they could help them to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or parts of lessons, and five teachers were observed. Five of the observations were carried out with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, school staff, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector took account of 49 responses to the online Parent View survey. The questionnaires of 17 staff were also taken into account.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at documentation including teachers' planning, the school development plan, tracking of pupils' progress, performance management targets, records of governing body meetings and their literacy survey.

Inspection team

Jackie Cousins, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds or are learning to speak English as an additional language.
- No pupils attend any other school for any part of their education.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. In this school it only applies to a small number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has specially resourced 'Enhanced Provision' for pupils with special educational needs. All these pupils have a statement of special educational needs for speech and language difficulties. Up to 20 can join the provision at any time, from Reception up to Year 5. These pupils come from other local schools and some travel considerable distances to attend until they are ready to return to their own school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus is above average, and the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average. The proportion supported through school action is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - all staff use pupils' targets effectively and consistently to feed back in lessons so that activities are tailored even more precisely to pupils' individual needs
 - targets for improving each teacher's skills are recorded in more detail.
- Help parents to improve pupils' progress by making sure they fully understand:
 - how they can help their child improve their work
 - how much progress their child is making every three months.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The children start in the Reception class with a wide range of skills and understanding, but typically below the levels expected for their age. As a result of good teaching they make good progress across the areas of learning. Children learn to communicate successfully. For example, they were able to talk at length about what happened when they went to the doctor's and wrote about going on a train because of the way staff asked probing questions and gave them practical activities to do.
- Boys and girls, including those who are learning to speak English as an additional language, achieve well in learning to read, write, talk, socialise and use mathematics. This is because the teaching is matched carefully to each pupil's ability level. For instance, more-able pupils learned to solve complex problems using their multiplication skills because the teacher challenged them to set their work out carefully, and so the Year 5 and 6 pupils learned to record their answers accurately. Work in books and information from checks on how well pupils are doing show that Year 6 pupils' skills and knowledge are above the levels typically expected.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to read. The staff make sure that pupils learn to use letters and sounds (phonics), and they have regular discussions to consider the best ways to work with different groups and individual pupils. For instance, Year 1 pupils learned to use phonics effectively when two groups read and wrote words containing the sounds 'ow' and 'ou'.
- The pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make as much progress as the others because the school watches over their achievement carefully. Extra one-to-one tuition and information communication technology equipment have helped to develop their basic skills. It is not appropriate to judge their attainment in English and mathematics compared to averages for other groups. The very small number of pupils concerned would make them easy to identify.
- Pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, learn to write well because exciting sessions are planned to discuss ideas and practise writing. For instance, Year 6 pupils learned to write about past events and famous British battles because they planned their work carefully before they started writing. As a result, pupils learned how to use facts, punctuation, paragraphs and imaginative vocabulary.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given extra support which is adapted well to their personal needs. These pupils made good progress from their various starting points.
- Pupils who attend the 'Enhanced Provision' achieve well. They develop their skills at their own speed and often learn through practical sessions. In recent years, all pupils who attended the 'Enhanced Provision' returned successfully to their school before they reached Year 6.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and support staff expect a lot from pupils and they encourage pupils to concentrate. This means that pupils achieve well. For example, Year 2 pupils learned how to read poems successfully. This is because the work was focused effectively on developing pupils' knowledge of why some words rhyme.
- Staff are very skilled at building pupils' self-confidence, including for those who need extra

assistance. This means that pupils are keen to have a go for themselves, follow their own ideas and extend their learning. In a session observed, Year 4 and 5 pupils' knowledge of materials and mathematics was developed well so they learnt how to measure ingredients accurately and combine them to make biscuits.

- Staff are imaginative in planning topics that interest pupils. They choose activities well to encourage pupils to learn several skills at once. For example, pupils learned about Spain and a famous Spanish artist because the project developed their creative skills as well as their knowledge of the world.
- All the teachers and support staff work together to provide a good range of practical experiences to develop pupils' basic skills. For instance, the Year 1 pupils learned about the properties of shapes because the teacher used resources in the school woodland, so pupils learned to identify shapes such as a cylinder.
- All staff keep a close watch on pupils' progress and note what they are able to do. They keep detailed records that track progress carefully. These show an in-depth picture of each pupil's achievements over recent years. Senior leaders and staff make good use of data and regularly consider whether each pupil is making enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Marking is specific, and often explains how pupils have been successful. Not all teachers and staff make time each week to discuss individual pupils' targets. This means that a few pupils are not fully aware about how well they are doing, or what they could do to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' self-esteem is raised outstandingly well, and so they are very keen to share their successes with everyone. The headteacher makes excellent use of assemblies for the whole school to raise pupils' self-confidence, for instance through pupils talking about their personal sporting awards.
- Many visitors and people who have worked with pupils inside and outside the school have written to say how very well the pupils behave. One person summed up others' thoughts when they wrote, 'I was particularly impressed with the impeccable behaviour of all children within the school.' In recent years the numbers of pupils who have been excluded has been extremely low.
- Pupils learn to work in groups very successfully. 'Wednesday of Wonders' sessions allow older and younger pupils to create things together. They thoughtfully share equipment and take turns extremely fairly when they make recipes from other countries such as China.
- Pupils are exceptionally eager to talk about all the things they like doing at school, even when they find things difficult. Pupils learn to continue when activities are tricky because staff encourage them skilfully. For instance, Year 4 pupils learned to present information well because the teacher asked them to talk about the difficulties they were having in deciding what scale they should use on the axes of a graph for their favourite theme park ride.
- Pupils learn very effectively about everyday risks and how to keep themselves and others safe. For example, they learned what to do if they were near a bonfire because the outside area was used to develop safe ways to respond to different situations. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe while using the internet because of very thoughtful instruction given by staff.

- Pupils say that the staff deal very successfully with the rare occasions when there is any bullying, and that they have staff to turn to if they are in any trouble. Pupils understand the different types of bullying that can happen. For instance, they know about different types of prejudice-based and cyber-bullying.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership at all levels is good, and the school has great systems for working out what is useful and what is less helpful when they frequently look for ways to improve the school. For instance, many teachers have enhanced their knowledge of phonics and the teaching of reading since the last inspection because of well-chosen training in these areas.
 - Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching and consider ways to improve it. Records of the areas for each teacher to improve are a little limited. This means that a few teachers are not totally clear about how to improve their teaching.
 - Many of the activities teachers plan support good levels of knowledge and understanding in more than one subject. For example, a trip to London was used to develop pupils' knowledge of famous buildings as well as their writing skills.
 - Pupils from a range of backgrounds and stages of development work together extremely successfully. Many topics help them to understand the differences between people's cultures in this country and abroad. For example, older pupils learned about the differences between beliefs in India and Great Britain.
 - Staff are extremely dedicated to the care and welfare of pupils. One said, 'I am proud to be part of the team at West Horndon and always do the best for our children.' The leadership of the 'Enhanced Provision' is good and these pupils' personal and academic progress is regularly checked. The school works resourcefully with other professionals, so pupils frequently profit from working with specialist staff to develop their speech and language skills.
 - The school works effectively with parents and nearly all responded positively to the inspection survey. A few do not feel well informed about their child's progress, and would like more guidance on how they can help their child reach their personal targets.
 - The local authority keeps in regular contact with the school and provides good support and challenge. It has helped the school by checking that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate.
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■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body carries out its role effectively. Governors complete training courses to help them hold the school more effectively to account. They recently completed a survey with pupils to see how well reading and writing were taught. The governors have a good understanding of performance data, and check on how strong teaching is by asking questions to identify whether progress is good enough for all pupils. They ensure that choices about how money is spent, for example specific pupil premium funding, always give best value. The governors have good ways to find out whether teachers and staff should be encouraged to improve or rewarded with salary increases. They thoughtfully review targets for the headteacher. They meet national requirements for keeping pupils safe, and make sure staff are appropriately checked and trained in child protection.
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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	114921
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	405548

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Mc Geachie
Headteacher	Matt O’Grady
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2010
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