

Wix and Wrabness Primary School

Colchester Road, Wix, Manningtree, CO11 2RS

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| 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 | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get a good start to their education in Reception and achieve well throughout the school.
- Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 have been on a sharply upward trend over the last three years.
- Good teaching enables pupils to develop effective skills in literacy and numeracy, especially in mental mathematics.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and behave well. They enjoy lessons and work well with one another. Those in Years 3 and 4 were so fired up about their topic on mythical creatures, they could not wait to get their ideas down on paper.
- Periodic weeks with a special focus, such as science or business and enterprise, enrich the learning opportunities for pupils.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Care and support for individual pupils with additional needs, including special educational needs, is particularly good.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and has moved the school forward significantly since the last inspection. Support and guidance to staff on how to improve their work, based on robust checking of their work, mean that teaching is being improved continuously and have driven the rise in standards.
- Governors provide effective challenge to the school. They work closely with the headteacher in taking important decisions, basing these on the course of action likely to most benefit pupils' education. Consequently, they have managed changes in staffing well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The pace of teaching is sometimes a little slow and work is not always challenging enough, especially for the more able.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to develop pupils' writing in other subjects other than English.
- While pupils' work is marked regularly, teachers do not always give pupils clear guidance on how they can improve it.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons and most of these were jointly seen with the headteacher. In addition, shorter visits were made to lessons to focus on specific aspects such as marking or how well work was matched to pupils' abilities.
- The inspector held meetings with a group of pupils and listened to some reading.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other senior and subject leaders and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector met with a small group of governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The inspector took account of the 35 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, as well as the 14 responses to a survey for school staff. She also spoke to a number of parents at the school gate to gather their views about the school.
- The inspector looked closely at a range of documentation, including information on pupils' performance, the school improvement plan, safeguarding and behaviour policies, as well as documents relating to the school's monitoring of teaching, behaviour, attendance.

Inspection team

Gulshanbir Kayembe, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is significantly smaller than other primary schools.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. About 10% are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number speak English as an additional language.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding given to the school for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is above the national average, and the proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils leave or join the school midway through their primary education. Over one third of pupils currently in the school joined after the start of Reception and 14% have joined over the last year.
- There have been a number of teaching staff changes this year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding by ensuring that teachers always:
 - provide work that is sufficiently challenging for all pupils in the class, particularly the more able
 - keep introductions short and give pupils as much time as possible to work on relevant tasks and activities that will promote their learning
 - give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work and build in enough time in lessons to enable pupils to respond to teachers' written comments or questions.
- Raise standards of work further by capitalising on opportunities for pupils to practise the writing skills that they are developing in English in other subjects, and develop further their ability to explain ideas, make comparisons and evaluate options in written form in subjects other than English.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children begin school with a wide range of skills and knowledge but their overall attainment levels are below age-related expectations, especially in literacy. From these below-average starting points, children make good progress and narrow significantly the gap between their attainment and age-related expectations by the end of their Reception Year.
- Pupils across the school also make good progress in literacy and numeracy.
- Year 1 pupils did not perform particularly well in the Year 1 test on letters and sounds (phonics) last year but these pupils, now in Year 2, along with the current Year 1 pupils and children in Reception are doing well in developing their reading skills. This is as a result to improvements in the way phonics is taught. Pupils' growing knowledge of phonics is helping them to make good progress in both reading and spelling.
- Pupils' skills in mathematics, particularly their knowledge and understanding of number work, are also developing well.
- Pupils' progress across Key Stage 2 is good and they develop their knowledge, understanding and skills well across a wide range of subjects. They are more confident in mathematics than at the time of the last inspection, and reading skills are developing particularly well.
- Standards of work have been rising over the last three years and, in 2012, results of tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were in the top 40% of schools nationally in English and the top 20% in mathematics in relation to the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level, Level 4. There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- Attainment in this year's Year 6 is lower than in the previous year but pupils have made good progress from their starting points.
- Amongst pupils currently in the school, those eligible for pupil premium are making good progress and achieving well. Standards of work are as good for these pupils as others. This is due to the effectiveness with which the funding is used. For example, one-to-one tuition has been used very successfully to narrow gaps in knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils who join the school partway through their education are doing well. They settle in very quickly and, where any are behind in their learning, they catch up rapidly with the rest of their class.
- The good support from teaching assistants helps disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to work well and to achieve creditable results.
- There are no differences in the performance of pupils based on gender or ethnicity. The small number who speak English as an additional language learn English quickly, supported by the encouraging and positive atmosphere of the school.
- Pupils develop good skills in a range of subjects, including information and communication technology and science. A good focus on investigative and experimental work means they are

making effective progress in developing problem-solving skills.

- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to improve pupils' writing skills by letting them practise these in other subjects. In addition, written work in other subjects does not always develop effectively enough pupils' ability to provide well-argued viewpoints, explanations or comparisons.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is usually good across a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics. Some is outstanding, particularly for younger pupils and children in Reception.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught well so that, by the time they finish Key Stage 2, pupils are well prepared for secondary school. The organisation of children in Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils into small groups of roughly the same ability for phonics sessions means that the work is very well matched to different levels of ability. Consequently, pupils make good progress in learning letter sounds and the sounds created by different combinations of letters.
- Teachers plan engaging activities that pupils enjoy. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 relished the work on mythical creatures and could not wait to write their own descriptions because they were so inspired by the lively pictures they had been given. Good modelling and exemplars heightened their awareness of powerful descriptive vocabulary, which they used well in their writing.
- Teachers check on-going work well and intervene successfully when, and if, pupils are not on the right track. They question effectively to check understanding.
- Support staff are generally used well in lessons and are effectively briefed by teachers. One-to-one support for those with more complex special education needs is skilled and contributes well to individual pupils' progress.
- The school's ability to be flexible in how it groups pupils and move them between different classes and groups makes a significant contribution to their learning. For example, the more-able Year 2 pupils are working with Year 3 and 4 pupils in English and mathematics and their learning is benefiting from this experience.
- Activities in classes are usually amended and adjusted well to match the different abilities and ages in a class. On occasion, however, pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged or extended quite as much as they could be.
- In some lessons, where work is exceptionally well planned and structured to move pupils to a higher level of learning, the pace of learning is slowed by, for example, an overlong introduction, thus, leaving less time for pupils to get on with the work and improve their skills.
- Written work is marked regularly and useful comments provided to pupils show them how well they have done. However, teachers do not always provide pupils with clear enough guidance on how to improve their work or give pupils time to correct their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' very positive attitudes support their learning well.
- Pupils are happy to come to school and most parents agree. Attendance is above average.
- Behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils are polite and helpful to others. Older ones look after those who are younger, and friendships across age, gender and ethnic backgrounds develop well. Those who join the school from other schools find it easy to make friends and fit in. This helps them to settle in quickly, engage positively in lessons and make good progress.
- Pupils know and understand the behaviour systems in the school. They say that bullying is rare though occasionally pupils fall out with one another but then make up, with the help of staff where necessary. Pupils are confident that they have someone on the staff they can talk to if concerned about any issue. They are also confident that staff will deal effectively with any bullying, should it occur.
- Pupils were very mature when talking about differences amongst them, saying that gender or race do not matter but that what is important is the personality of a person when making friends or learning how to get on with someone else.
- The safety of pupils is high on the school's agenda. Pupils are safe at school and the large majority of parents agree that this is the case.
- In lessons, pupils are well focused and work well with one another in groups or pairs. They occasionally become distracted and begin to fidget when expected to listen for too long. At their best, pupils are thoughtful and reflective, coming up with good ideas that they readily share and discuss.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher sets clear and high expectations of the work of staff and pupils. She makes regular and frequent checks on teaching and learning. Teaching staff are provided with clear and constructive feedback on what to do to improve their work; coaching and mentoring as well as training and visits to other schools are carefully targeted to continuously improve teaching, particularly to tackle any shortcomings.
- Systems and procedures are very well developed and these have helped new teachers to settle quickly into their roles, including leadership roles. The latter are developing very well so that the new English and mathematics coordinators have already carried out a review of pupils' books and observed lessons. These activities have enabled them to identify, and work on, the right priorities for improvement.
- A good range of subjects, including French, provide pupils with effective learning opportunities to broaden their knowledge, understanding and skills. Opportunities for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, with visits, visitors and links with other schools making a good contribution.
- The local authority provides good support and has assisted the school in identifying key areas for development to help it move from satisfactory, at its last inspection, to good.
- The school's monitoring, for example of attendance, behaviour and academic progress, focuses

on different groups well to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

- Together with governors, the headteacher has managed the staffing issues over the year exceptionally well and stabilised the staffing. However, a minority of parents have been concerned about the changes in teaching staff. While the school has provided regular updates to parents, it has acknowledged that, given the unusual circumstances, it needs to do even more to keep parents fully informed.
- Action was taken during the inspection to write to parents to highlight the benefit of not securing a temporary teacher for Reception children but to move them into the Year 1/2 class. This has provided a very good transition opportunity for the Reception children as they are getting to know the teacher in whose class they will be in the coming September.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors provide a delicately balanced level of support and challenge, including supporting the headteacher to rigorously tackle any underperformance. They know the school exceptionally well, including the progress being made in different classes and the quality of teaching, because they visit regularly, talk to pupils, sit in on lessons and meet with key members of staff to discuss the school's achievement data and teaching. The governing body manages its budget prudently and this has enabled it to fund a separate class for Year 6 next September. It checks regularly on the effectiveness of pupil premium funding and makes sure that decisions about teachers' pay are linked to the progress of their pupils. The governing body ensures that the school's arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet the current regulatory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 114739 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 401462 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 86 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Sharon Kirwan |
| Headteacher | Lorraine Oldale |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 May 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01255 870282 |
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