

St Mary's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Woodbridge

Burkitt Road, Woodbridge, IP12 4JJ

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 of all ability levels make good overall progress. By the time they leave the school, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is most effective.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make accelerated progress.
- The school makes excellent use of its grounds and visits to enrich the curriculum, which contributes extremely well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They are polite and courteous and are very respectful towards each other and their teachers. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- The governing body is well aware of the school's strengths and where improvements need to be made. It is beginning to challenge senior and subject leaders more effectively.
- The headteacher, supported by governors and deputy headteacher, has maintained a focus on continuing to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Parents overwhelmingly support the work of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The best practice in school is not shared fully to help all teachers move their teaching to outstanding.
- Teachers do not always plan tasks that meet the needs of all of the pupils, particularly the most able, to ensure they make quick progress in every lesson.
- Teachers' marking does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.
- Subject leaders do not yet have enough opportunities to develop their roles further.
- Governors do not find out for themselves the impact of school improvement work being undertaken by staff.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, six of them together with members of the senior leadership team.
- They examined pupils' work in their books, as well as looking at displays of pupils' work in the classrooms and corridors. In addition, they spoke to a range of pupils about their learning and other aspects of school life, and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 reading.
- The inspectors held meetings with members of the school's leadership team, as well as several governors. They also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, a range of policies including those relating to safeguarding, records of meetings held by the governing body, information about pupils' progress and records of behavioural incidents. They also looked at the school's website and information on how its results compare to others, and records relating to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors took account of the 63 responses to the online Parent View survey and the views expressed by parents spoken to on the playground. Inspectors also took account of the views of the 26 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Nicola Hardman, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Marian Driver

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding to help certain groups, including pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so it is consistently good or outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - in all lessons for all age groups, each ability group is set work that is demanding enough to move their learning rapidly to the next level
 - marking shows pupils what they need to do to improve their work further, and pupils are always given time to respond
 - the very best practice in teaching already in the school is shared to assist all teachers in moving their teaching to outstanding.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - providing systematic opportunities for subject leaders to develop their role, linking with governors and other schools
 - ensuring that governors are fully and regularly involved in finding out for themselves the impact of the improvement work being undertaken by the staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for the last three years. In 2012, for example, pupils left the school a year ahead of pupils nationally.
- The percentage of pupils in Year 1 who met the expected standard in the government's phonics screening check was above average because of the way phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught. A high priority has been placed on developing pupils' reading skills. Pupils throughout the school read a wide range of books with confidence and enjoyment, making the most of the new school library. Pupils are able to discuss the work of different authors and to express a preference for different styles of writing. They develop a love for reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Close monitoring of their progress by staff, who provide a good range of well-designed activities, meet these children's academic and social and emotional needs effectively. As a result, they make even better progress than their classmates.
- Only very small numbers of pupils are eligible for pupil premium. It is not possible to report on their achievement at the end of Year 6 without identifying individual pupils. Throughout the school, however, eligible pupils make good progress. As a result, the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates is narrower than seen nationally.
- The very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who speak English as an additional language, make better progress than other pupils, reflecting the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all.
- Senior leaders make regular checks on the progress pupils make to ensure that all have the opportunity to perform equally well. Where pupils are seen to be in danger of falling behind, extra help and guidance are promptly provided. Subject leaders are starting to develop this same approach.
- Children start school with skills that are above average for their age. Opportunities are sometimes missed to carefully plan activities that meet the needs of all children, particularly to stretch the most able, so they do not all progress as well as other children by the time they join Year 1.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have high expectations for what the pupils can achieve, and make them clear to the pupils. Typically, teachers use the information on how well each pupil is doing effectively in their lesson planning. This makes sure that each ability group is set work at just the right level of difficulty to move their learning rapidly to the next level.
- Most teachers show that they have excellent subject knowledge and encourage pupils to use technical vocabulary confidently and accurately. They reshape lessons effectively according to pupils' understanding, so that the momentum of learning is maintained. Additional adults are used well to support pupils who need extra help and to ensure that they are able to take a full part in lessons. This is especially the case in Year 6.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and they know the pupils well, creating a calm and purposeful environment in the classroom which is conducive to learning.
- Where teaching seen during the inspection was occasionally weaker, the work set for pupils was not demanding enough and the pupils did not learn with the speed that was typically seen where teaching was good or better.
- The quality of teachers' marking in English and mathematics is variable. Some is exemplary and provides pupils with clear and helpful guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are routinely expected to follow up their suggestions. However, not all teachers' marking is as effective in providing pupils with precise feedback, nor are all pupils given sufficient time to respond to teachers' advice so they can develop and improve their skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The pupils' attitudes to learning are typically exemplary; they behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They are invariably polite and helpful and show great respect for each other and staff.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and well cared for in school. They say that if they have a concern, it is quickly dealt with.
- Pupils enjoy playing in the well-developed outside areas. Pupils describe the 'excellent' work of the Year 6 play leaders. All pupils participate in a range of planned activities in zoned areas. The pirate ship is a favourite, stimulating their imagination in creating games.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying and were able to confidently discuss how to keep safe when using the internet or mobile phones.
- The school council members discuss with pride their work and their involvement in the school. The pupils say they are proud to wear their badges and school uniform and say that school 'feels like one big family'.
- Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently well, and this ensures that all pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development ensures that all pupils know right from wrong.
- Parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire and those spoken to directly were positive about the behaviour and safety of their children.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. The school has worked successfully, with support from the local authority, to reduce the number of persistent absentees. Governors have also engaged with parents to help them recognise the importance of regular attendance.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership for the school, and is well supported by the deputy headteacher. This strong team is rightly developing the role of subject leaders, so they can share best practice across the staff.
- The school regularly check the progress made by individual pupils, and uses the resulting

information effectively to improve and accelerate achievement. The school recognises that it has relied too much on the senior leaders to carry out this work in the past, and the time is right for subject leaders to take on more responsibility.

- Pupils are motivated by a stimulating curriculum which makes excellent use of the well-developed grounds to enrich their experiences. They also benefit from what they describe as 'a wealth of opportunities' beyond the curriculum, for example in music and sport. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extensively through the school orchestra and choir, and also through sporting activities in advance of the new national sports funding for primary schools. Pupils greatly enjoy their experiences both within and beyond the school.
- Parents spoken to directly, and those who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, overwhelmingly support the leadership team and would recommend the school to other parents. Several of their comments expressed appreciation of the way in which their children's particular needs had been met.
- Staff development is of high importance to the leadership team. The system for reviewing staff performance management recognises strengths within the staff and has shown that more opportunities need to be made to share best practice across the school. The school is also aware that staff could gain from links with other schools to further develop their own skills and knowledge.
- The local authority provides a standard annual 'data pack' covering test results for the school, but has only a limited awareness of its performance. It currently provides no support beyond training for governors, as it says the school is performing at a level where direct support is not required. The local authority is prepared to help the headteacher to participate in work supporting other local schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is clear about the strengths of the school and is keen to help it to continue to improve. A wide range of training from the local authority has sharpened the governors' skills and awareness, and made them well placed to make decisions. They are now looking to find out for themselves how well the school is performing and increasingly challenge leaders at all levels, including by beginning to work directly with subject leaders to look at the impact of their improvement work. Governors are starting to look in more depth at the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress, to ensure that all staff, including the headteacher, are held fully to account for pupils' achievement. Governors work closely with staff to ensure that safeguarding policies and practices meet national requirements. They monitor the use of financial resources effectively, including the use and impact of the pupil premium.

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	124773
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	427211

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Wright
Headteacher	James Leese
Date of previous school inspection	7 January 2011
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