

The Wickford Church of England School

Mount Road, Wickford, SS11 8HE

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Outstanding 1
Achievement of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The work of leaders and managers, including governors, has led to pupils receiving an excellent quality of education to make their achievement outstanding.
- Pupils become fully absorbed with their learning, listen to their teachers and complete work cooperatively for extended periods. Their attitudes have an extremely positive effect on the progress they make.
- Parents, pupils, staff and governors are all proud of the school and work together extremely effectively to make it even better.
- Parents are very positive in their views of the school. All parents who expressed an opinion said that the school promoted good behaviour and they felt that it kept their children safe. Virtually all said that they would recommend the school to others.
- Children are given an excellent start to their education in the Reception classes. As a result, children quickly gain in confidence and make excellent progress.
- The range of subjects that is taught and clubs is extremely wide and varied. Activities include such opportunities as golf, netball, gardening, dance, art and football.
- The values that the school promotes have a very positive effect on the quality of pupils' experience of the school day and on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to feel proud of what they have achieved.
- Pupils from all groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, all make excellent progress and attain well-above average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Outstanding teaching is the norm throughout the school. Adults working with pupils all engage in an excellent level of questioning and discussion with them all. This elicits their understanding, develops their vocabulary and maintains exemplary levels of concentration.
- In a very few lessons, the quality of teaching and learning is less than outstanding. This is because adults do not always model the sounds letters represent with perfect clarity or, occasionally, the quality of feedback to pupils about their work does not enable pupils to make excellent progress.
- Attendance has improved and is above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes and in the nurture group in seven lessons, including one which was a shared observation with the headteacher and one with the executive headteacher. In addition, pupils were heard reading, assembly was observed and pupils' work in books was scrutinised.
- Discussions were held with a range of people including some staff with management responsibilities, the Chair of the Governing Body and Trust and four other governors and pupils.
- Inspection took account of the 72 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as of letters from parents and 24 responses to staff questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including those relating to: safeguarding, planning and monitoring, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, the school's own data on pupils' progress and documents relating to spending money received for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked-after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals.

Inspection team

Sheelagh Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Wickford Church of England School is smaller than the average primary school.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British.
- The school converted to become an academy school in December 2011. When its predecessor school, Wickford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school now works in partnership with another local school. This school is also part of the Academy Trust.
- In recent years there have been considerable changes to staffing, including reorganisation of senior leadership, following the conversion to academy. The most senior member of staff is the executive headteacher of both of the schools run by the academy trust.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion requiring support from outside school or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- There is a nurture group on site, attended for four mornings a week by up to eight pupils from other local schools.
- A breakfast club is run by the school in the mornings.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the highest levels of teaching and learning at all times by:
 - making sure that feedback to pupils about the quality of their work is always at the standard of the best
 - ensuring that when adults model the sounds letters make for pupils, they do so with perfect clarity.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- The great majority of children start in the Reception with skills and understanding that are below and, for some, well below, the standards expected for their age.
- The three core areas of learning for young children of personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication and language are given suitably high focus in the Reception classes. As a result, children make excellent progress in these aspects.
- Pupils from all groups, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and more-able pupils, make excellent progress. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, standards are well above the average attained nationally. School results are in the top 20% of all schools.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding significantly exceed the standards reached by similar pupils nationally and also exceed the standards reached by those not eligible for the funding nationally. In 2012, Year 2 eligible pupils also exceeded the standards attained in reading, writing and mathematics by pupils in the school not eligible for the funding.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They demonstrate stamina in their learning and concentrate for relatively prolonged periods to achieve their aims. For example, children in Reception relentlessly completed number problems on a computer tablet. One child punched the air in celebration when he was successful with one problem and exclaimed, 'Yes! I can do it!'
- The support given to pupils with particular needs, including pupils who attend the nurture unit, is effective in enabling all to make the rapid progress they are capable of, so that their achievement is in line with that of their classmates.
- Early reading and writing skills develop exceptionally well because of the well-planned teaching of phonics (learning of the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent) and the regular opportunities pupils are given to practise these skills and develop confidence and motivation. The results of the phonic check of pupils in Year 1 in 2013 were significantly above national results. On occasion, however, less-than-perfect enunciation by adults slows learning to good.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is always at least good and nearly always outstanding. Consequently, pupils' achievement is outstanding. Teaching takes great care to make sure that learning is exciting and captures pupils' interest. For example, pupils in Year 1 were excited at the prospect of designing a new bandana for Pudsey Bear, using different combinations of colours to add up to ten dots.
- The expectations of pupils' achievement are high, including in Reception. Children and pupils are visibly pleased with what they and their friends manage to do. This was demonstrated by one child in Reception, who, on seeing that his friend had correctly written the numeral for 'eleven', said 'Well done! You have made 11!'
- Adults match work very carefully to each pupil's specific needs. Planning is detailed to meet the

needs of all pupils in the class including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium and potentially higher-attaining pupils. In addition, teachers are very proficient in fine-tuning what they do and the questions they ask very exactly and they are extremely alert to each pupil's responses. Their perception contributes to highly effective learning by pupils from all groups, such as those in Year 2, who confidently state which dinosaurs were alive, at which period in prehistory, and what each ate.

- Pupils are effectively involved in evaluating the progress they make in their learning by assessing how well they and their friends have completed tasks. They say that their teachers give them good information on how to improve their work still further.
- Classroom assistants are very effective and work collaboratively with teachers to ensure that children are given the precise level of support and encouragement to enable them to make the best possible progress. Pupils in the nurture group make excellent progress because of the care taken to reduce anxieties. As a result, they take part in assemblies and listen with delight to stories about Paddington Bear.
- Adults ensure that children are given excellent opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding by allowing time for reflection, celebration and investigation. The resulting pride pupils feel about their work is shown by the way they eagerly talk about it and the opportunities that they have in clubs.
- Work to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is always at least good and usually outstanding. Where it is excellent, care is taken to ensure that the best possible examples of enunciation of the sounds letters make are used for children to emulate and feedback given to pupils on the quality of their work is of the standard of the best.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school and to their learning. This is because of the support and encouragement given by all staff, and the effort teachers make to make learning as interesting and exciting as possible. As a result, pupils listen with full concentration and join in whole-heartedly.
- All of those involved in the school, including parents, staff, governors and regular visitors share an extremely positive opinion of behaviour and safety in the school. Pupils say that they feel safe and show this by their relaxed and happy manner at all times. All parents who responded to the online questionnaire said that they think their children are safe in school and that pupils are well behaved. Pupils are proud of their successes and of their learning and willingly give praise to others.
- Anti-social behaviour is not allowed and rules are established from Reception onwards. Bullying is rare. Disagreements are rare and staff are swift to step in to resolve any disagreements in a calm manner. Pupils say that, on the rare occasions that they are anxious, their concern is swiftly resolved.
- The adults who work in the school share an excellent understanding of young children and pupils. They apply the behaviour-management policy consistently well. As a result, pupils' social and emotional development is enhanced. Those pupils with particular behavioural needs make the same excellent progress as the rest.

- Safety is given high regard and adults explain why some things are not safe. A carefully constructed programme on e-safety is taught to all pupils to ensure that they remain safe at all times when using computers. Pupils are encouraged to learn to take responsibility for their actions and consider the needs of others.
- Attendance has significantly improved over the past year and is, currently, above the national average. Pupils move in a swift and orderly way when changing classrooms for different group activities and lessons start on time. The breakfast club provides a good start to the school day for those who attend.
- The school provides very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the values of care and support for others run throughout the school day.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Outstanding leadership helps the school aspire to enabling pupils to attain the highest standards. These impressive results are achieved by accurate and rigorous self-evaluation, linked to clear-sighted planning. Leaders' excellent capacity to bring about further improvement is shown in pupils' outstanding achievement and the efficient induction of new teachers.
- Management is outstanding and enables all staff to work exceedingly effectively together. Carefully planned spending on resources and a high emphasis on staff training enable aims to be achieved. To do so involves making the professional development for all staff a high priority, and all benefit from the training opportunities made available.
- Parents are very supportive of school and nearly all who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire would recommend this school to others. The strong links with parents have a very positive impact on the progress pupils make in their learning. Parents are encouraged to attend sessions to help them to understand what their children are being taught and how they can help to continue this at home.
- The range of experiences that are provided is exceptionally wide and includes opportunities for pupils to take part in an extensive range of sporting and cultural activities. Among the many other opportunities on offer is the chance to plant, care for, harvest and eat vegetables in the garden. Recent additional funding for sport has enabled high-quality dance and movement sessions to be provided, as well as sporting activities far beyond those normally found in infant schools. The full impact of these additional activities on pupils' physical education, health and well-being are too recent to be accurately evaluated. However, pupils respond exceptionally well to the many learning opportunities provided.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The aims and values of the school are woven very effectively into everyday practice. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to investigate and reflect on what they see and to gain a real sense of their own achievements.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Consequently, the transition of children into and out of Reception is extremely smooth.
- The support of the academy trust through opportunities for training and working with another local school has enabled teachers to develop their skills effectively. Teachers responsible for

managing individual subjects perform their work extremely well, because they benefit from the frequent, high-quality training opportunities provided by the academy trust.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement because they visit regularly and actively seek out information on how well the school is doing. They have confidence and expertise with which to question and challenge the headteacher and the executive headteacher, but also provide them with great support. This is because governors have a very clear understanding of the interpretation of data about the progress pupils make – a result of their own regular, well-targeted training. They are very aware of the quality of teaching and have taken positive decisions, with regard to financial management, so that this excellent quality is maintained. The performance of staff is evaluated in relation to pupils' progress and high performance appropriately rewarded. As a result, governors have ensured that the gap between the performance of less-advantaged children and the rest has been eroded. Governors carry out their responsibilities extremely well and ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet 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	137744
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	428975

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Cooke
Headteacher	Debbie Rogan (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2008
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