

St Mary's Wavendon CofE (VC) Primary School

Walton Road, Wavendon, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK17 8LH

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2014

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.

- Pupils make rapid progress from Reception onwards and all groups achieve well. Pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics has been above average for the last two years.
- Although current Year 6 pupils' attainment is at the level expected for their age, these pupils have made good progress from their starting points.
- Most teaching supports pupils' progress well. Staff's effective use of practical resources and interesting methods makes learning enjoyable for pupils. Open-ended questions make pupils think hard and ensure pupils are actively involved in their learning.
- Timely checks and effective assessment and support ensure that disabled pupils, those pupils with special educational needs and new arrivals are fully included in lessons and make good progress.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and close friendships with each other contribute well to their successful learning. Pupils are courteous, considerate and reflective. Their good behaviour and willingness to listen carefully to each other and to staff ensure that activities run smoothly and that they are conducted in a good spirit.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and are fully aware of a wide range of potential hazards outside school.
- Leaders, especially the headteacher, and governors, have taken very effective action, including through the use of external consultants, partnerships and training, to improve long-term planning and to raise pupils' achievement throughout the school.
- Leaders check rates of progress and the impact of the actions they take to drive improvement regularly to ensure that no pupil gets left behind.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not achieve quite as much in writing as they do in reading and mathematics because handwriting and presentation skills are not always taught well.
- Staff do not always provide pupils with high quality oral and written guidance to enable them to make consistently rapid progress in lessons and maximise their achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in nine lessons taught by five teachers. Four of these lessons were observed together with the headteacher.
- Samples of pupils' work in writing and mathematics were analysed. The inspector listened to a sample of Year 2 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the nine questionnaires completed by staff and the 20 responses by parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View). He also took into account the results of the school's own recent survey of parents' views and spoke informally to some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector looked at a range of evidence including: the work in pupils' books; monitoring records; consultants' reports; the school improvement plan; the school's own data on pupils' attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased considerably in the last two years, but there are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The number of pupils attending who live outside the village in which the school is situated is rising. Many more pupils than is commonly the case join or leave the school before the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for certain groups such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is low. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in writing, by:
 - making sure pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are of the very best quality and speeding up the progress they make in writing
 - ensuring that all pupils are given high quality oral and written guidance that helps them to learn at the best rate possible at all times.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well during their time in the school. They do particularly well in Years 5 and 6; progress in the younger age groups, especially in Reception, is speeding up.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 varies, dependent on the nature of the small cohorts and the length of time pupils are in attendance at the school. Overall, it has increased across the school in the last two years.
- The levels of skills and aptitudes of most children when they join Reception are below those typically expected for their age. Well-planned enhancements to the outdoor area and to teaching have improved children's rates of progress, and pupils now join Year 1 with slightly above-average attainment.
- Early reading skills are taught well. In 2013 all pupils were successful in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make). Reading records show that staff work effectively with parents to develop pupils' skills. Year 2 pupils read competently and know how to work out the pronunciation of new or 'tricky' words.
- In 2013 the attainment of Year 6 pupils was above average in reading and mathematics, including at the higher Level 5, and average in writing. The proportions of pupils, including the more able, who made or exceeded the progress expected of them compared favourably with national averages, especially in reading.
- Attainment in the current Year 6 class is at the level expected. Nonetheless, these pupils have made good progress from their below-average starting points in Year 3.
- Attainment in writing, whilst average, has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils, especially boys, are benefiting from an improving range of opportunities to apply their writing skills in topics which interest them, such as 'Super Heroes'. However, weaknesses in handwriting and presentation are evident in the work of some pupils and these are barriers to higher achievement and attainment.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Effective monitoring of individual, well-conceived education targets and experienced support enable them to progress and achieve successfully. Staff ensure that new arrivals, including pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, settle quickly in school. Close tracking of their achievements ensures that they make the same good progress as their classmates.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2013 known to be eligible for the pupil premium for their performance to be compared without potentially identifying them. The progress of these pupils across the school is similar to that of their classmates.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good over time and leads to pupils, including new joiners, making good progress and achieving well in English and mathematics. Pupils' attention is captured and their interest sustained by the range of interesting resources that teachers use. Warm relationships encourage pupils to respond willingly to their teachers' questions and to demonstrate personal responsibility, for example in choosing resources and organising equipment. They settle quickly to learning tasks during registration times.
- Reception staff ensure that children cooperate fully with each other in sharing equipment and during paired activities. This helps children to concentrate well on tasks which require them to identify mathematical patterns or to persevere, for example when using metal detectors to hunt for hidden coins.
- Reception staff check children's progress carefully and make good use of the improved outdoor area to enable children to reinforce or to extend their skills.
- Pupils have to think hard and logically when presented with open-ended questions, and this

speeds up their rate of progress. Activities are usually well matched to pupils' different levels of ability. They provide sufficient scope for middle- and higher-attaining pupils to decide for themselves the best ways to explore, organise and record their ideas. For example, pupils use of new technology or spider diagrams in literacy lessons and in investigative, problem-solving tasks in mathematics.

- The very effective teaching of disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs who receive one-to-one support ensures they make rapid progress.
- Staff ensure that pupils make good use of the increased range of sports activities to improve their levels of physical fitness and personal skills. This was demonstrated at playtimes and in a gymnastics lesson where pupils enthusiastically performed a series of fast-paced, demanding, stretching exercises. These not only tested pupils' agility but also their powers of concentration and perseverance.
- Pupils enjoy writing for a varied range of purposes, and readily make connections in their learning, for example when reading *Mr Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory* and discovering the properties of chocolate in science. However, staff sometimes do not pay enough attention to teaching handwriting and presentation skills with sufficient precision. This leads to some work being untidy and detracts from its otherwise good quality.
- Sometimes, pupils do not learn as effectively as they could because they are not always given high quality guidance about how to improve their work in lessons or or in their books.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children's needs are identified quickly in the Reception class. Additional adults who work with children at risk of not doing as well as their peers ensure that they take a full part in lessons, enjoy their learning and achieve successfully.
- The behaviour of pupils in all years is good and most pupils are keen learners. Only a few pupils require firm guidance, and monitoring through class behaviour logs assists them to concentrate fully on learning.
- Warm relationships with each other and with staff and pupils' enjoyment of a wide range of subjects incline pupils to be 'switched on' in lessons. Their careful listening to each other, for example during circle time activities, promotes learning well as pupils take turns to build on, and to extend, each other's answers.
- Pupils have very few concerns about behaviour or bullying and are confident of their ability to resolve any infrequent, minor 'fallouts' they have with their classmates, either on their own initiative, or with the help of staff.
- Pupils say that the school is like 'one big family'. New arrivals report that they settle in and make friends quickly because of the school's pairing arrangements that link them to a 'friend'. Exclusions and racist incidents are extremely rare. Attendance is consistently above average.
- Pupils also behave well in the playground and in the dining hall. Older pupils seek to apply the messages of forgiveness, respect and tolerance, which they learn about in assemblies, in their relationships with one another.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is good, is approved of by 99% of parents, and is well known to pupils. Pupils appreciate the features of the well maintained site, such as the secure entry system and soft tarmac areas which enable them to feel entirely safe during the school day and to enjoy the improved range of play equipment and activities at break times.
- Pupils are provided with plentiful training about how to seek help and how to keep themselves safe in potentially hazardous situations, such as when using the internet, playing or working in the vicinity of water courses, railways and busy roads.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well and ensures that there is no discrimination. Staff compile detailed notes on pupils who require extra help and leave no stone unturned in seeking to resolve any issues these pupils may face. Actions taken are reviewed in a timely manner and are assessed closely for impact.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has taken rigorous action, with the support of external consultants, to review and to improve many aspects of its work since the previous inspection. The headteacher has forged links with two local schools to learn from their recognised good practice. Training has been used very effectively to improve teaching and pupils' progress and achievement.
- The headteacher has implemented a comprehensive range of plans and procedures for checking on the impact of the school's work. These are based on accurate school self-evaluation and are followed up consistently well. This has enabled leaders to adopt a rigorous strategic approach to developing the quality of education provided and in building capacity to ensure continuous improvement. The robustness of these systems has enabled the school to surmount the challenges posed by staff changes in middle leadership.
- The headteacher's unwavering determination to raise pupils' achievement and strong organisational skills underpin much of the recent improvement. The appointment of a skilled assistant headteacher in September 2013 has strengthened leadership capacity further. Together, they carefully monitor teachers' performance and follow up, in further observations and by sampling pupils' work, to make sure that improvements are made speedily.
- The subjects, themes and topics that pupils are taught are adapted expertly to meet the needs of all pupils. Leaders step in quickly and effectively to direct extra resources to pupils who would need extra help or who would benefit from small-group or individual tuition to boost their attainment. Pupil premium funding has been used wisely, as reflected in the achievement of this group, and is assisted by the recent appointment of a teaching assistant to provide specialist tuition and other forms of useful support for eligible pupils.
- Leaders set suitable targets for pupils' performance. They revise them swiftly as pupils leave or join the school, so that no pupil slips behind. These targets were almost all met or exceeded for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2013. Staff are fully aware that they are accountable for pupils' progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well, for example in assemblies where pupils reflect thoughtfully on themes such as penitence and ways in which they can contribute to the wider community.
- The first instalment of the recent national sports funding for primary schools has been spent suitably. It has been used, for example, for specialist sports coaching in gymnastics and in other sports, and to extend the range of opportunities for pupils to take part in physical activities at lunchtimes and after school. Participation rates have risen and the school uses an ever increasing number of measures to check on the impact of this spending, including the periodic weighing of pupils.
- The local authority has supported the school's drive to improve its effectiveness well through, for example, moderation exercises to check on the accuracy of the school's assessments, brokering external support and in providing guidance for new staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors take their responsibilities seriously and work with leaders effectively to ensure that statutory requirements are met, including for safeguarding.
 - They have spent monies wisely to secure improvements in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to strengthen senior leadership and to ensure pupil premium funding has improved the achievement of eligible pupils.
 - They know how well pupils are doing and what aspects of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding need further improvement.
 - They are suitably involved in managing staff's performance and use the information which they receive appropriately to check whether the headteacher and other staff have fully achieved their targets before agreeing to pay rises.
 - They have recently put in place more formal systems for logging the ways they contribute to school improvement, for example through training and focused visits.

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	110439
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	431037

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Wilkes
Headteacher	Amanda Dicks
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2012
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