

# Spellbrook Primary School

London Road, Spellbrook, Bishop's Stortford, CM23 4BA

**Inspection dates** 30 April –1 May 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make particularly good progress in learning about phonics (the sounds that letters make) and in counting.
- Pupils' achievement is rising at Key Stages 1 and 2. School records and work in pupils' books show that those currently in the school have made good progress.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about how their teachers help them to learn.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They have positive attitudes to learning and praise the school's friendly atmosphere.
- The school has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher, other leaders and managers are working effectively to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.
- The governing body is closely involved in the work of the school and makes a valuable contribution to school improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always enable pupils to make rapid progress. Occasionally, teachers give pupils work that is either too easy or too difficult and this slows their progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have regular opportunities to write, solve problems and learn to add and subtract, but they do not do so often enough.
- Although progress is good across the school, standards in Year 2 are currently higher in writing and mathematics than in reading. More pupils in Year 6 are working at high levels in mathematics than in reading and writing.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 11 lessons and almost all were observed jointly with the headteacher. She also observed an assembly, lunchtime arrangements, and listened to some pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior teacher, the mathematics leader, the Early Years Foundation Stage teacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and with a group of pupils. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took into account the 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), letters from a small number of parents and 12 completed staff questionnaires.
- The inspector looked at the school's work and at documentation, including: leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness, the school development plan, information relating to safeguarding, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and sampled pupils' books and learning journals (which contain examples of work by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage).

## Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is below average and only a few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is average. (This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is higher than in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the present headteacher had just taken up her post and most of the teachers were newly qualified. There has been one change of teacher since then and two of the four class teachers had leave of absence during the last academic year.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils who make rapid progress and build on existing strengths in teaching by:
  - increasing opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to practise their writing, to add and subtract and to develop their problem-solving skills
  - making sure that teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 always set pupils work that is neither too easy nor too difficult
  - raising attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 so that it is in line with that in mathematics and writing
  - increasing the percentage of pupils who reach higher levels in reading and writing by the end of Year 6.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are in line with expectations for their age, but there are variations because of small numbers in each year group. In recent years, children have moved up to Year 1 having attained a good level of development. Children currently in the Reception Year are making good progress. They are doing particularly well in using their knowledge of phonics to read and spell words, and are well ahead of most children of their age in counting and recognising numbers.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a gradual improvement in standards at the end of Year 2. Pupils are now making good progress at Key Stage 1 and are set to reach above-average standards this year in mathematics and writing. Their attainment is average in reading.
- The school's results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 rose from average to above average in 2011. Performance was similar in 2012. Following a dip in pupils' achievement in 2013, standards are rising again and test results are expected to be significantly higher at the end of this year. All groups of pupils currently in the school have made good progress during their time at Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's results in 2013 were affected by changes in staffing during the year. Some pupils joined the school late in Key Stage 2 – some of whom had additional learning needs – and there was not time for the school to help all pupils to achieve well by the end of Year 6.
- There are examples of pupils making good progress and attaining above-average standards in their work in other subjects. For example, pupils have made good progress in art and design in learning about the work of famous artists and in developing their tonal drawing skills. Older pupils have produced in-depth pieces of work in history, and pupils throughout the school are making good progress in physical education.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in response to well-focused support. Pupils of minority ethnic heritage and the few pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to that of other pupils. The most-able pupils are making good progress because work stretches and challenges them to learn at their level.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 dipped in 2013: they were down on 2011 and 2012 results in writing and lower in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Although progress in reading was good and most pupils made at least the progress expected in mathematics, less-able pupils did not all make as much progress as they should have done, particularly in writing.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium outperformed their classmates at the end of Year 6 in 2012. Pupils for whom the school received this funding made less progress than the rest of the class in 2013, but there were too few to report their attainment without identifying individuals. The school has sharpened the way it identifies gaps in pupils' skills and those eligible for the pupil premium are currently making good progress and their attainment in English and mathematics is close to that of their classmates.
- A whole-school push to raise standards in mathematics has led to a significant increase in the proportion of older pupils working at Levels 5 and 6. Greater emphasis on the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling has begun to raise standards in writing, and the school is also focusing on improving pupils' comprehension skills to raise their attainment in reading. However, these developments have not yet brought the proportion of pupils working at higher

levels in reading and writing up to that found in mathematics.

### **The quality of teaching is good**

- The quality of teaching is largely good, including in English and mathematics, and there is some outstanding teaching. Throughout the school, teachers use questioning well to deepen pupils' thinking and check their understanding.
- Teachers' increased subject knowledge in mathematics has improved the quality of teaching in the subject. In English, teachers provide pupils with opportunities to write for a range of purposes so that they develop a variety of skills. Pupils are clear what their targets for improvement are, and older pupils have the skills and perception to evaluate each other's work.
- Staff who provide additional support for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those eligible for the pupil premium, liaise closely with class teachers to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. This ensures that support programmes are matched closely to pupils' learning needs.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Work in phonics is matched well to what children are to learn next and teachers' high expectations mean that children in the Reception Year can already count in twos to 50 and in tens to 100. Children have regular opportunities to practise their letter formation and to apply their knowledge of numbers. The development of writing, addition, subtraction and problem solving are not specified for regular practice, however, and this means children's progress is not as rapid as it could be in these areas.
- Teachers usually engage pupils with challenging work that enables them to develop a range of skills, knowledge and understanding. This helps to instil in pupils an enjoyment of learning. Just occasionally, work in part of a lesson is either too difficult for less-able pupils so that they do not understand it fully, or too easy for the most able, thus slowing their rate of progress.
- The school has used assessment information effectively to identify gaps in pupils' reading skills at Key Stages 1 and 2 and in their writing at Key Stage 2. Teachers have visited other schools to observe best practice in the teaching of reading and writing, and teaching assistants have undertaken training in the teaching of reading. This has increased their skills, but improvements in the teaching of reading and writing are not yet as fully established as those in mathematics.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of the pupils is good. They are polite and helpful, and have positive attitudes to learning. They speak with enthusiasm about their teachers and about the experiences they have had in school. They apply themselves well in lessons and work effectively together.
- The school has good procedures for managing behaviour and pupils value the system of rewards and sanctions. On a wet lunchtime during the inspection, pupils behaved well as they talked and played together in their classrooms in a purposeful and sensible manner. Records show that behaviour is normally good and any inappropriate behaviour is handled effectively.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils develop a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers. Many visitors come into school to teach them about various aspects of staying safe and this helps them to identify risks for themselves. Parents express confidence that their children are well looked after and kept safe. Leaders ensure that access to the school is secure and that staff are rigorously checked

prior to their appointment.

- Pupils know about different types of bullying but say that the school is very friendly and that staff make clear how pupils should treat one another. Those interviewed during the inspection said that they have not experienced bullying; they said that although there are occasional fallings out, pupils are soon friends again afterwards. Pupils who join the school during key stages receive good support to settle in.
- Most pupils attend school regularly but the overall attendance rate is pulled down by a small minority of pupils. To remedy this, the school is in the process of tightening its procedures about pupils taking holidays during term time and is actively persuading parents that their children should not miss out on the good education that is provided for them.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The school is led and managed well and it has made good improvement in areas identified at the previous inspection. Teachers are now more experienced than they were at that time and senior leaders are taking the right actions to raise pupils' achievement. Teachers have had good opportunities to develop their skills through training, for example, in increasing their subject knowledge in mathematics. Networking with other local schools has also contributed to the development of teachers' skills and teamwork among the staff is strong. Pupils are expected to behave well and try hard and do so.
- The headteacher receives good support from other staff with key leadership responsibilities. The senior teacher takes a lead in collecting and analysing information about pupils' attainment and progress. The mathematics leader is fully involved in checking the quality of teaching and in driving work to raise pupils' achievement. The Early Years Foundation Stage teacher is enthusiastic and outward looking in her efforts to improve children's learning opportunities.
- Senior leaders regularly check on teachers' work by observing lessons, looking closely at pupils' work and evaluating teachers' planning of learning. They give teachers clear advice on how to improve their work and termly progress meetings hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress. In response to the dip in standards in 2013, leaders have made sure that any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified and that support is put in place. This is helping to ensure pupils all receive equal opportunities and that there is no discrimination.
- Learning opportunities enable pupils to enhance their skills and pursue their interests. Educational visits contribute well to pupils' academic and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils speak with considerable enthusiasm about the range of learning experiences the school provides and these clearly help to motivate them.
- The school is making good use of its primary school sport funding to raise pupils' achievement, increase their participation in sport and promote their health and well-being. The funding is also used to develop greater expertise among the staff. Sports specialists develop pupils' skills not only in physical education lessons but also in before and after-school activities. Sport funding is enabling pupils to develop as sports leaders and increasing opportunities for inter-school competitions.
- The local authority provides good support to the school. Through regular visits, the improvement partner has a clear knowledge of the school's work and supports leaders in setting targets and evaluating its performance. Training and support provided by the local authority have proved particularly helpful in raising pupils' achievement in mathematics.

### ■ **The governance of the school:**

- Since the previous inspection, the governing body has strengthened the contribution it makes to school improvement. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and have had training in interpreting data on progress and attainment. They receive information about the way pupil premium funding is spent and are sharpening the way they check on its effectiveness. They are well informed about the quality of teaching; they make sure that teachers' salaries reflect their effectiveness and that any underperformance is tackled rigorously. They ensure the management of staff performance is effective in enhancing teachers' skills. Governors make sure that statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding pupils.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117405
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	444205

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Iain MacDonald
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Vise
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 723204
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