

The Weatheralls Primary School

Pratt Street, Soham, CB7 5BH

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Strong leadership has brought about considerable improvement since the last inspection.
- Children in Nursery and Reception make good progress, often from low starting points. This continues through to Year 6, by which time pupils attain broadly average standards in reading and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved and is now securely good, with some that is outstanding.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding in lessons and around the school.
- Procedures to ensure pupils are safe are effective. Pupils feel safe and are well looked after by staff.
- The headteacher is well supported by other senior leaders, subject leaders, staff and governors in raising achievement and developing teaching.
- The governing body makes a marked contribution to the success of the school. It has an accurate view of the school's performance and governors are not afraid to ask demanding questions and to hold the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are weaknesses in writing for some of the older pupils in the school.
- Some work is not difficult enough for the more-able pupils.
- Marking and the advice given to pupils about how to improve their work is better in some classes in writing than it is in other subjects.
- Some parents feel that their concerns are not addressed quickly enough, particularly relating to the behaviour of a very few pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 19 teachers together with a number of short parts of lessons and other activities. They also observed groups led by teaching assistants. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher and assistant headteachers. Inspectors also watched assemblies, lunchtimes and playtimes. They also observed pupils arriving and leaving school.
- Discussions were held with pupils, parents, teaching and other staff, school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors took account of the 77 responses to the online survey Parent View and the 55 responses to the staff questionnaire. Inspectors also obtained the views of more than a dozen parents bringing their children into different classes in the school and took into account the views in twelve letters sent to inspectors by parents.
- The inspectors observed the school at work and considered a range of documentation. This included data on pupils' progress and attainment and future projections based on the school's analysis of pupils' progress. They also looked at school improvement planning documents and the school's procedures to enable it to gain an accurate view of its performance. In addition, the inspectors looked at minutes of governing body meetings and documentation relating to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

St.John Burkett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Redmile

Additional Inspector

Janette Daniels

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Weatheralls is much larger than the average sized primary school. It is growing in size as it changes from two classes in each year group to three.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding, which in this school supports pupils who are in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Approximately one-tenth of pupils at the school are from white backgrounds other than British.
- A before- and after-school club are situated within the main school buildings. They are managed by organisations other than the school and inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is supported in its work by the East Anglian Gateway Teaching School Alliance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and progress, particularly in writing by:
 - ensuring that marking is equally strong in all subjects, and that pupils always respond to the guidance given
 - consistently give more-able pupils harder work in lessons.
- Improve communication with parents by:
 - acting consistently to manage behaviour and to resolve any issue
 - making it easier for parents to speak to the school's senior leaders
 - ensuring that teachers have enough time to talk to parents about how well their children are doing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is rising consistently across the school. Children start in the Nursery and Reception classes with skills and knowledge that are below and often well below those typical for their age. They make good progress and by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are reaching standards closer to those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils continue to make good progress so that since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in Y2 has risen and is in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards attained by pupils have risen since the previous inspection and at the end of Year 6 in 2013 were in line with the national average, although they remain below in writing. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked to improve the progress that pupils make. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that pupils are now making good and sometimes exceptional progress in all year groups. However, the school's tracking indicates that for some of the school's older pupils achievement in writing is below that in reading and mathematics, due to weaknesses in teaching prior to the previous inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is rising because teaching is improving and because they are keen to learn and work positively together to develop their skills.
- Pupils make good progress in understanding and using the sounds that letters make to read and write because the teaching of phonics is well structured. The proportion of pupils meeting the required standard at the end of Y1 was in line with the national average in 2013 and is now above average, according to the school's own data. Pupils of all ages are competent readers and enjoy reading a range of books. The work of the school librarian and the well-stocked library contribute significantly to pupils' positive attitude to reading.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support eligible pupils. As a result, they are making progress similar to and in some cases better than that of their classmates. In 2013 the attainment gap had closed so that they were attaining at similar levels to other pupils.
- Pupils who are from other ethnic groups including those from other white backgrounds achieve similarly to other pupils because they are well supported and have positive attitudes to their work.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of effective teaching and the high quality support and guidance provided by teaching assistants.
- The school is using primary school sports funding well to develop the skills of staff and consequently improve the learning and participation of pupils in PE. For example, teachers have been trained to teach dance within the curriculum.
- More-able pupils are effectively challenged in most lessons. However, occasionally they are not given work which is hard enough.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now securely good with some that is outstanding.
- Teaching successfully engages pupils and promotes good progress for all groups. Teachers establish positive relationships with the pupils and make good use of questioning to probe, extend pupils' understanding and improve their learning. Teachers generally have high expectations for what pupils can achieve, and carefully plan work to ensure pupils can all make good progress.
- The improved teaching to ensure that all pupils can make good progress demonstrates the school's successful commitment to ensuring equal opportunities and eliminating any discrimination.
- Pupils understand clearly what they are learning because teachers explain it well and because the quality of marking and advice is mostly highly effective. It is usually detailed and thorough. Teachers provide praise for good work and constructive comments to guide pupils to the next stage of their learning. Pupils appreciate the care teachers take to mark their work and report how the marking really helps their learning. However, in some classes marking gives pupils clearer advice in writing than in other subjects. Although most pupils listen carefully to advice and then improve their work, on a few occasions they do not have the opportunity to do so.
- The opportunities teachers provide to enable pupils to talk to each other about their work and help each other in their learning is effective in raising the rates at which pupils learn.
- Teaching assistants work well with pupils of all ages. They are particularly effective in helping those who find learning more difficult, or those who may need to be helped with their behaviour, ensuring all pupils focus well on their learning and make good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils are taught well and make good gains in their learning. They receive good guidance and instruction from adults in speaking, writing and numeracy. Children are given good opportunities to explore, be creative and find things out for themselves.
- Teachers are accurate and thorough in checking pupils' attainment. They use this information well to plan their teaching and in most lessons to set challenging work for different groups of pupils and to set them clear individual targets for learning. Occasionally, more-able pupils are not given work which makes them think hard and improve their learning well.
- Teaching across the school is becoming increasingly more effective and growing numbers of pupils are experiencing outstanding teaching. Where teaching is particularly effective, pupils are absorbed by what they are learning and make rapid progress.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well and often in an exemplary manner in lessons and around the school, for example, during and after playtimes or when leaving the hall. They get on well with their teachers and other staff, and are polite and respectful to adults and to each other. Pupils are confident speakers and express their views clearly, particularly when talking about their work.

- Pupils work well in lessons, respond quickly to teachers instructions, cooperate well with each other on tasks and are friendly and helpful. They are enthusiastic about learning, and teachers are becoming increasingly skilful at talking to pupils about how to improve their work.
- Pupils take care over the content of their work and are proud of what they achieve. They look after their books carefully and are neat and tidy when they set work out. However, at times pupils' handwriting can be untidy.
- The school successfully promotes a love of learning and is fostering pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through growing numbers of opportunities. For example, in a singing assembly they were asked to think about the power of music and to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. As a result pupils say that they feel safe at school and very well cared for by staff. They remarked 'All adults sort out any situation you get into' and that this included issues which took place out of school.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying and its different forms, including name-calling and cyber-bullying. How to deal with bullying is strongly promoted by the school through the use of 'Bullying Ambassadors' and the e-learning curriculum. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and falling out with their friends. During the inspection, a number of parents expressed concern at incidents in the past relating to a very few pupils, or uncertainty about how behaviour was managed. Inspectors observed that pupils all got on well with each other and found that behaviour was well-managed in classrooms and around the school.
- The school uses a red and yellow card system to manage behaviour. Not all staff are using this as intended and so it is not working as well as it could.
- The school works hard to promote and check good attendance. Consequently absence has fallen and the school's own data shows attendance is now above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, together with other leaders and staff has successfully driven up improvement in teaching and achievement since the previous inspection. Together, they have established high standards in all classrooms and pupils are making improving progress.
- The school's senior leaders work together to provide a strong team who are moving the school forward. Subject and other leaders are keen to promote continuing improvement and are playing a growing role in ensuring that a rising proportion of pupils are exceeding nationally expected progress. Recent appointments have strengthened the quality of leadership and confirmed the school's capacity for further improvement.
- The school's own view of its performance is accurate and realistic and it has written detailed action plans to ensure that it continues to improve.
- The management of teachers' performance is thorough and has contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching across the school. Decisions regarding pay and progression are directly linked to whether staff meet their targets and the impact they are having on pupils' achievement. Training is matched to the school's priorities for improvement and its effectiveness is reflected in the improving quality of teaching and the adult support observed in lessons.

However, some teachers said they have sometimes been asked to take on additional work beyond that which might normally be expected, and that their work is checked too often. As a result, there is sometimes not enough time to talk to parents about how well their children are doing.

- Until recently, subjects were focused on the core skills of reading, writing and mathematics in order to raise standards of achievement in these areas. The school now provides a more suitably broad range of subjects that meets the interest of pupils. Appropriate emphasis is now given to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects. As a result, pupils strive to achieve well. A range of clubs, residential and other trips, visits and visitors make pupils' learning meaningful. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted increasingly well.
- The school is using the primary sport funding to support a range of initiatives that are designed to increase pupils' involvement. These include taking part in competitive sports days, with some success, and joining in events with other local schools. A change for life club promotes healthy lifestyles and awareness.
- The local authority supports the school well, particularly by working with senior leaders to check on the progress and impact of the school's work. Partnerships with local schools, particularly through a Teaching Schools Alliance also helps the school to share and develop good practice.
- Some of those parents and staff who shared their views during the inspection told inspectors that it is sometimes hard to tell the school's senior leaders about worries they have about children at the school and that sometimes things have not been made better straight away. Whilst inspectors agree with these comments they found the leadership and management of the school to be good overall because of the way leaders, teachers and staff work together and the standards of achievement, teaching and behaviour seen during the inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective in its work. Governors are well-informed and ambitious. They know the school well and bring a wide range of expertise to their roles. As a result they hold leaders rigorously to account but are also able to provide good support and advice regarding development priorities. They regularly review the quality of their own work and seek to improve how they work with the school. They ensure financial management is robust and teachers are rewarded for the quality of their work, although they have not considered the work-life balance of teachers carefully enough. They visit the school regularly and draw on what they learn from these visits to evidence improvement. They are confident the school is improving and that the targets set for the end of the year will be met. Governors have a detailed knowledge of safeguarding procedures and ensure statutory requirements are met.

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	110769
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	441989

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	570
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Naicker
Headteacher	Chrissy Barclay
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2012
Telephone number	01353 720456
Email address	office@weatheralls.cambs.sch.uk

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