

Great Wakering Primary School

High Street, Great Wakering, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 0EJ

Inspection dates 24–25 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards in Year 6 are above average. Most pupils achieve well and make expected or better progress in all subjects.
- The most-able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are increasingly making better than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
- Most teachers have high expectations of their pupils, know them very well and ensure that they are given suitably challenging work.
- Teachers' assessments are accurate and the curriculum is planned carefully to provide pupils with exciting and imaginative activities that enthuse them and hold their attention.
- Marking across the school is of a high quality, and this ensures pupils know what they do well and how to improve their work.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding.
- Leaders are respected by staff, children and parents. They have worked successfully to bring about necessary changes and to improve teaching and standards.
- Governors are skilled in supporting leaders and in helping them to improve the quality of teaching and to raise levels of achievement.
- There is a good community spirit and relationships between pupils and teachers are strong. Pupils feel safe in school. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils typically behave well in lessons and around the school. In some lessons, they demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are not consistently good in Years 3 to 6.
- The explanations which teachers give to pupils are not always clear enough and teachers do not all check in lessons on how well different groups of pupils are learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 28 lessons, 14 of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and teachers, pupils and three members of the governing body.
- They held discussions with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe, and information about the management of teachers’ performance.
- The views of 125 parents and carers were analysed through their responses recorded on the Parent View website. Inspectors also spoke with parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by the 35 staff who returned a questionnaire.
- Inspectors also listened to pupils read in Year 2.

Inspection team

Kelly Stock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Matthew Klimcke	Additional Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector
Neil Harvey	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion who are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs or the new education, health and care plan, is also below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care, is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress in writing by improving pupils' spellings, punctuation and use of grammar in Key Stage 2.
- Further improve teaching and learning by ensuring that all teachers:
 - provide clear explanations so that pupils know exactly what they should do when they work on their own.
 - check the learning of all groups of pupils carefully in lessons.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked very effectively to improve the quality of teaching over time. The management of teachers' performance is very effective. Teachers are only rewarded if they meet their performance targets.
- Leaders have improved the way both they and teachers use pupil performance data since the previous inspection and this has improved pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum is well designed and engages pupils' interests. Pupils say learning is nearly always fun. School trips and visitors help to make learning more meaningful. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding and this was best seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were able to imagine what life would have been like as a street child in a workhouse. The school is currently working on a whole-school mosaic to commemorate the First World War.
- The school is in the early stages of working towards full implementation of its preferred approach to assessment following removal of National Curriculum levels. Marking and the accuracy of assessment have improved considerably since the previous inspection and this is helping more pupils to make the progress they should in Key Stage 2.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to support pupils academically and helps eligible pupils to access sports clubs, school visits and music lessons.
- Good use has been made of the sports funding and, as a result, pupils are making greater use of a range of sports clubs, including a popular climbing wall club. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about the benefits of exercise and a healthy lifestyle.
- Parents are positive about the school; they say the headteacher is approachable and that 'teachers are an asset to the school.'
- The local authority has provided valuable training and support. It has contributed to improvements in the quality of teaching, including through its checks confirming the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' work.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body was reconstituted in 2012 and governors now enjoy a strong mix of skills and experience. Succession planning is already in place for when the Chair of the Governing Body leaves.
 - The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths including the quality of teaching and areas for improvement. They are confident in holding the school to account and fully understand the school's performance data.
 - Governors carefully monitor the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and are confident in asking questions about performance management and the pay of teachers to ensure that pay is matched to targets and the quality of teaching over time.
 - The governing body ensures that statutory requirements for safeguarding are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are well mannered and polite to each other, teachers and visitors. In lessons, they share ideas and help each other readily.
- In the large majority of classes, behaviour is good or better and teachers are consistent in their use of the behaviour policy. Behaviour around the school is equally good. Pupils play well together. At breakfast club and at lunchtime, there is a strong social atmosphere. When reminded of the school's expectations of behaviour, all pupils respond quickly.

- In Years 5 and 6, pupils speak thoughtfully and sensibly about their work, demonstrating excellent attitudes to learning.
- A small number of pupils in a few lessons take longer than they should to get on with their work. Not all pupils are able to work well on their own or in groups without their teacher's direct supervision. When pupils are slow to settle, it is often due to unclear explanations which leave pupils not knowing what they are expected to do.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe at school, that bullying is rare and that, if it does happen, teachers deal with it quickly. There are a number of vulnerable pupils with challenging needs and these pupils are supported well. As a result, they behave well and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils are punctual, and, for the most part, smartly dressed and proud of their school. Pupils who join the school partway through their primary education say they are welcomed straightaway. Attendance levels are above average.
- Pupils have a good sense of what is right and wrong. The school is part of the Stonewall project to teach pupils to support different lifestyles in the community. As a result, pupils understand what constitutes inappropriate, homophobic or racist language. In the pupils' vision statement, they write, 'Nobody gets left out at GWPS; we all have opportunities and choices. We are all different and we treat everyone fairly.'

The quality of teaching is good

- Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations and relationships are strong. As a result, teachers know pupils very well and usually provide all groups with suitably challenging work.
- Teachers have received significant training and support to improve their teaching and, as a result, pupils' learning over time has improved. This is leading to higher standards. Teachers now ensure that pupils think hard about their learning.
- In Years 5 and 6, teachers question pupils carefully and give precise feedback so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work. 'Polishing pens' are used effectively by pupils in lessons and in their books to edit their writing. Marking across the school is of a high quality, and outstanding marking was seen in one Year 5 class where pupils received detailed comments to help them to identify what they are doing well and how to improve their work. This enables pupils to make good progress, particularly in their writing. The best marking encourages pupils to respond to their teacher's comments, and pupils are confident in talking to each other about their work using grammatical language accurately.
- The teaching of reading is good; pupils enjoy reading and have opportunities to read every day at school. The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is also good, and this is starting to improve pupils' spellings in their writing, especially in Key Stage 1. In a Year 5 class, word walls and displays were used very effectively to help pupils to improve their vocabulary and grammatical language.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge in mathematics, and pupils' books show increasingly complex calculations and problem solving. In Years 4 and 6, particularly, pupils enjoy mathematics because they say 'it is challenging and we do investigations.'
- Teaching assistants are well directed and skilled in supporting pupils' learning.
- Occasionally, when activities are less challenging or teachers' explanations are unclear, some pupils become distracted. When teachers do not pick this up quickly enough, time is lost. This tends to happen when the class is divided into groups and the teacher works with one group at a time, without checking sufficiently on the work of the other groups.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join Year 1 with broadly average attainment. By the end of Key Stage 1, children now achieve above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in the national assessments in Key Stage 1 in 2013 were above average, particularly in reading, and were similar in 2014. Pupils make good progress in their acquisition of early literacy and numeracy skills and also in their personal development.
- In 2013, results in the Year 1 phonics check were above the national average. Provisional results for Year 1 in 2014 show that pupils performed above the 2013 standard.
- The large majority of pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above average overall. Achievement in all subjects over time is rising and pupils make at least expected progress in all years.
- In Key Stage 2, results in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test were below the national average in 2013. The school has now successfully improved standards in writing and handwriting, particularly in Key Stage 1, but recognise that there is still more to do in terms of improving some aspects of pupils' writing skills in Key Stage 2. Standards seen in Year 5 show significant improvements in writing, spelling and the use of punctuation. However, this rate of improvement is not yet evident across all year groups.
- The most-able pupils in Year 6 achieve well. Most are on track to exceed nationally expected progress in English and mathematics this year, and they make expected or better progress in all subjects.
- The school uses the pupil premium to provide a good range of support for disadvantaged pupils. In 2013, eligible pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 were one and a half terms behind their peers in school and nationally in reading and grammar, three terms behind in mathematics, and two and a half terms behind in writing. This year, the gap in attainment between pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and others is closing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well due to the high-quality additional support provided for them in lessons.

The early years provision is good

- Children start in Reception with abilities and skills typical for their age. In 2013, all children made expected or better progress, so that pupils started Year 1 with above-average attainment.
- Children settle quickly into the school's routines and become polite, collaborative learners. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and play harmoniously together, resulting in safe play. Children are respectful of each other, tolerant and show an understanding of the world around them. Behaviour is good.
- The Early Years provision is well led and managed. Staff are well trained and supported. Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, particularly in phonics, which is taught well. Adults plan well, often making sure that the activities they organise are engaging and challenging. Most teachers make good use of the learning environment to motivate and interest the children, resulting in a sense of awe and wonder.
- Additional adults are used well in lessons to support and to extend learning, especially for children with special educational needs, disadvantaged children and those who are at risk of underachieving. Children who have special educational needs and the most-able children make good progress, with many securing a good level of development.
- Children's 'learning journals' show good progress over time, and good communications between home and school.

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	114792
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	442018

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Puddick
Headteacher	Hayley O'Dea
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2012
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