

# West Leigh Infant School

Ronald Hill Grove, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 2JB

## Inspection dates

22–23 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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.

- The headteacher leads by example. There is a strong and effective team of senior leaders and governors. Together they focus sharply and effectively on narrowing gaps where there are inconsistencies in pupils' achievement.
- Leaders and governors ensure that training, through partnerships with other schools, contributes to improvements in teaching. Pupils make good progress and achieve well as a result.
- Teaching is good and leads to standards that are significantly above average at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They have exemplary attitudes to their work and enjoy learning. This helps them make the most of the activities provided.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and feel that the school keeps them safe and secure.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. This is reflected in their well-developed social skills, and in the kindness they show towards each other.
- Children in the Reception classes make good progress. Caring staff help them to settle quickly. This helps the children to enjoy their learning.
- Parents are very positive about the school and fully support the headteacher's high aspirations for the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Boys' attainment in writing, especially at the higher levels, is not as strong as girls.
- The outdoor learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not as well developed for learning as the inside classroom.

### Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 14 lessons or part lessons. Eight observations were with the headteacher or other senior leaders. Inspectors also made a number of other short visits to classrooms.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, and looked at work from each year group, much of this with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, behaviour, safety and attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the governing body. They also evaluated information on individual pupils' progress and monitoring records of teaching.
- Inspectors met with pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents. They also held discussions with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of parents were obtained through the school's surveys and the 155 responses to the online Parent View survey. Many parents also submitted written comments to the inspection team. Written comments from 46 members of staff were also considered.

### Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Helen Morrison	Additional Inspector
Rachel Welch	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- West Leigh Infant School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- About one in twenty pupils in the school are disadvantaged pupils for whom additional funding, known as the pupil premium, is received. This is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is less than five per cent, well below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, at less than three per cent, is also below average.
- The school is part of a group of schools supported by a National Leader of Education from Alexandra Infant School in Bromley.
- The school shares the site with West Leigh Junior School.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in staff, particularly among staff with additional responsibilities.

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

- Accelerate the progress that boys make in writing so that achievement is outstanding by:
  - making sure that writing tasks planned engage and sustain the interest of boys
  - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of what boys can achieve in their writing
  - providing clearer guidance to the most-able boys about how to improve their writing further.
- Enhance provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children make even better progress by:
  - making sure that learning outside is as rich and varied as that inside
  - improving the quality of resources designed to stimulate children's physical development.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's strong vision and ambition for the school is shared by the whole school community. She is ably supported by the senior leaders and governors. As a result, teaching continues to improve, and well-above average attainment is sustained. Pupils' outstanding behaviour contributes to a positive climate for learning.
- Teachers with additional responsibilities all play an active role in developing the school. Although some are new to their roles, they draw effectively on their varied previous experiences.
- The school has an accurate view of its strengths and has effective plans to tackle areas that need further improvement. Systems to check on teachers' performance are robust, so that pay awards are made only when there is evidence that pupils are achieving well.
- The school is well prepared to meet new requirements for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. In this area, as in other things, the school is working closely with the partner junior school. This makes the move into Year 3 a smooth and effective one for all pupils.
- Additional staff are deployed effectively using the pupil premium funding. This is helping to close gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, particularly in mathematics last year.
- The school's strategy to employ a specialist sports teacher is having a positive impact. Additional funding to promote primary school sports is used well to help children understand the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle. As a result of specialist training, teachers have increased their confidence in teaching gymnastics and dance to a higher standard.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for the pupils to prepare for and explore life in modern Britain. There is a strong emphasis on tolerance and mutual respect in school. This reflects the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity. The way that subjects are taught through topics and themes make a strong contribution to the pupils' moral and social development, as well their spiritual and cultural awareness. There is no discrimination. One parent reflected the views of the vast majority in commenting, 'The school provides a varied and fun curriculum and this fosters an enthusiasm for learning, both at school and at home.'
- Parents play an active role in the life of the school. This was evident, for example, in the numbers who attended their child's assembly during the inspection. Others provided effective help during a Year 2 mathematics game. An overwhelming majority are full of praise for the school. These strong relationships reflect the school's strong commitment to involving parents in the life of the school. Almost all the parents who stated a view would recommend the school to others.
- The local authority has provided limited support as it regards the school as providing a good education.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors make an effective contribution to improvements in the school. They have made considered changes to the membership of the governing body to help them support the headteacher's drive for further improvement.
  - The headteacher keeps governors well informed about the school. Governors make regular visits to give them first-hand knowledge of the work of the school. Consequently, they know about the quality of teaching and what the school does to tackle any weaknesses. They understand the data that tell them how the school is performing in comparison to other schools.
  - Governors manage the budget well, and know how particular budgets, such as the pupil premium, are used to effectively support eligible pupils. They hold the school to account through performance management so that pay awards reflect the good progress of the pupils.
  - Governors make the most of training opportunities and this helps to ensure that they have the right

skills to carry out their duties. They carry out their duties efficiently and ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled to a high standard, including those related to safeguarding.

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

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Around the school it is exemplary. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils show high levels of care and consideration towards each other, and they are exceptionally polite and welcoming to visitors. This helps the school be a warm and harmonious community. As one pupil said, 'I like this school because of the kindnesses.'
- Pupils' excellent attitudes towards their learning make a strong contribution to their progress. They are eager to learn and enjoy taking part in all subjects. These attitudes are fostered exceptionally well right across the school.
- Pupils are friendly and play happily together at break and lunchtimes. Many happily take on extra responsibilities, such as eco-warriors, library monitors and school council representatives. As a consequence, they quickly develop strong social skills.
- Pupils are rightly proud of their school, and they wear the uniform with pride. They take great care with the presentation of their work.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Governors and staff are meticulous in their checks to ensure staff are suitable to work with children. All staff are vigilant and well-trained in how to keep pupils safe. For instance, in the early years, staff ensure that toys and resources are safely stored and that children are taught how to keep safe when using them.
- For their age, pupils have a very clear understanding of how to use the internet safely and deal with its dangers. Parents strongly agree that the school places a very high priority on keeping pupils safe.
- Pupils are taught thoroughly and carefully about the types of bullying pupils of their age might encounter, and what to do if they do encounter any. They know what constitutes bullying and say it is rare. Parents agree. Pupils are completely confident that help is at hand to solve problems, either from their peers or any member of staff. Pupils learn and understand how to keep safe on the roads, and near water.
- Attendance is consistently above average. The school is quick to follow up all absences. Pupils' eager excitement to take part in all the school offers is reflected in their readiness to learn and eagerness to come to school.

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

- Teaching is consistently good. All teachers have high expectations and ensure that pupils know exactly what they need to do to learn a new skill. Well-planned and stimulating activities ensure that work is not too easy or too hard.
- The teaching of reading is particularly strong. Teachers question pupils effectively so that their understanding is deepened. Year 2 pupils for example explored the story '*What's the time, Mr Wolf?*' to help them understand how to devise questions of their own. By using the story and the pictures, the teacher was able to develop pupils' ability to read with expression, make predictions and arrive at well-judged conclusions.
- Pupils' skills in phonics (the sounds letters make) are very well-developed. Planning is excellent and ensures progress is rapid. Teaching assistants are suitably trained and help to make reading enjoyable. As a result, pupils quickly learn how to successfully read unfamiliar words.

- All teachers use similar ways to help the pupils learn more quickly. Different ‘animals’ help the pupils in their learning. ‘Lee the learning ladybird’ helps the pupils know what they are learning about. ‘Sam the successful spider’ informs the pupils what they need to do to be successful learners. ‘Toni the target turtle’ then helps pupils with what they need to do next to improve their work. As a result of these aids, pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning.
- The teaching of calculation skills has been developed further through the school’s changed approach to mathematics. Pupils’ mental mathematics abilities have improved significantly, and pupils show increasing confidence in using the correct mathematical concepts. Year 2 pupils, for example, developed an understanding of different number patterns as teachers and other adults supported their learning in small-group games.
- Teaching is helped by teachers’ strong subject knowledge, supported by specialists and well-focused training. This is the case, for example, in music, computing and sports. Year 1 pupils gained an excellent understanding of how to use a computer program to make different mathematical shapes. The teacher’s strong subject knowledge helped pupils acquire new vocabulary and skills quickly.
- Marking and feedback is effective across the school. Pupils appreciate teachers’ positive comments which ‘tickle them pink’, and the next steps in learning written as ‘green for growth’. Many take the opportunity to correct their work, and this helps learning to progress more quickly.
- The school is aware that boys’ progress in writing is not as rapid as that of girls. Teachers have made some headway in providing tasks which are designed to engage boys’ interests. However, this has not yet led to some boys, particularly the more able, consistently making as much progress as the girls. On occasions, teaching needs to have higher expectations of what all pupils can achieve, stimulating boys’ interests more and making it clear how they can develop their writing skills.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils’ progress and achievement across the school is good. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is sustained across Year 1 and 2.
- Pupils in Year 2 have attained standards significantly above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics in each of the last three years. Information provided by the school shows that standards continued to be well above average in 2014.
- In 2013, gaps in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and their peers were small in reading and writing, and there were no gaps in mathematics. When compared to pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils’ attainment was higher in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in 2014, the Year 2 pupils had wider gaps in reading and writing than the school had previously seen. Action taken using the pupil premium is already beginning to eliminate the gap this current year.
- The small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Teaching assistants and other adults provide effective support in classrooms, and timely one-to-one help outside the classroom ensures that these pupils do not fall behind in their learning.
- The most-able pupils excel, particularly in reading and mathematics. Many attain the higher levels. Well-designed activities set higher challenges which help to extend their learning. However, boys’ attainment in writing is not as strong as that of the girls, though it nonetheless compares favourably with the national average for boys.

### The early years provision is good

- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective. Because children join the Reception classes from a wide range of different pre-schools, regular contact is made with them and their parents before they start, so when children arrive they settle very quickly. Most have skills typical for their age. They are well cared for, and make good progress, so are well prepared when they move into Year 1. Most leave the

Foundation class having achieved a good level of development.

- Girls achieve higher than boys but this gap is now closing. Attention is given to stimulating all groups of children so there is always something exciting and fun to do.
- Children's behaviour is outstanding. They show considerable concentration and respond well to adult support. They quickly become familiar with the environment so make full use of the equipment. Staff ensure that they are safe and learn how to play safely with each other.
- Parental support is strong. Parents contribute to their children's journals so that teachers can track the progress made by the children at home as well as in school. Parents are also invited to help out in lessons. One parent commented, 'The transition from pre-school has been outstanding as is the communication with parents.'
- Childrens' relationships with adults are good. The indoor environment is calm, and children are given a varied and stimulating range of activities. In particular, creative skills are developed through a wide range of different materials and resources.
- Some of the changes introduced by the new leader have not yet had time to have an impact on the provision, in particular in the outdoor area. Children have relatively few opportunities to explore, investigate and try things out in the outside area. Available equipment gives little opportunity for children to develop their physical skills, such as balancing and climbing. Activities do not always take account of the children's interests, or reflect the vibrant and stimulating activities in the indoor classrooms.

## 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>	114780
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	448462

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Donald Fraser
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary Clarke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 476610
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