

# Wessex Primary School

St Adrian's Close, Cox Green, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 3AT

<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 May 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Wessex Primary is school where individuals (staff as well as pupils) are cared for, valued and helped to achieve. It is highly regarded by the majority of parents. Leaders are ambitious for the school and have responded robustly to the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have risen steadily and standards are at least in line with national averages.
- Leaders have introduced the new national curriculum and assessment in reading, writing and mathematics very effectively. The changes have been communicated well to parents.
- The quality of teaching has improved as a result of leaders' rigorous monitoring and support. Pupils respond well to the lively and often challenging teaching. Information about pupils' achievements is tracked carefully so that no pupil falls behind.
- Children make good progress in the early years. They are taught well and thrive in the stimulating environment.
- Pupils enjoy school and many said that their teachers are 'fantastic'. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to ask and answer questions and are developing as confident and articulate speakers. They show respect for others and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The way that the school looks after pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Staff are vigilant about ensuring that each pupil's social and emotional, as well as academic, needs are met. Safeguarding is managed very well and pupils feel safe and well cared for.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disability, including those with a hearing impairment, are supported well and make at least good progress.
- Governance is very effective. Governors know the school well and visit regularly. They are far from complacent and provide a high level of challenge and support to school leaders.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not make as much progress in all subjects as they do in English and mathematics.
- Not all subject leaders are as effective as those for English and mathematics.

## Full report

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

- Improve pupils' progress in all subjects, so that it is as good as in English and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that pupils are given work in these subjects that is challenging and meets their different starting points and abilities.
- Improve the leadership of all curriculum subjects by:
  - developing the skills and expertise of subject leaders to drive improvements in their subjects, drawing on the good practice seen in English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders responded robustly and effectively to address the areas for improvement identified in the 2014 inspection and follow-up monitoring visit. The headteacher's passion and determination have inspired loyalty in staff, parents and pupils. There is a strong sense of teamwork at Wessex Primary and staff feel valued and well supported. Comments such as, 'I love working here', 'the school is fantastic', and 'there is a lovely caring environment' were some of the many positive comments in the questionnaires and from discussions with staff. The vast majority of parents share this positive view and several spoke about the 'family feel' and 'school community' and how well their children were doing.
- The headteacher, ably supported by a strong team of senior leaders, has established rigorous regular checking of the quality of teaching and pupils' work. These systems have contributed to improving teaching and developing consistent practice, for example the use of the 'hot and cold' tasks that help teachers to measure progress. Staff work well together, to plan lessons and share ideas. They are keen to learn and readily ask each other for help.
- The management of staff performance and setting of targets are organised well. Staff feel that the process is fair and helpful; their practice has improved as a result. Staff benefit from a good range of professional development opportunities. Last year, the English and mathematics subject leaders were given time to work closely with teachers to help introduce the new national curriculum and assessment arrangements. They worked alongside teachers, modelled lessons and offered feedback and advice. This good practice was highly regarded by teachers and helped to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching. These subject leaders have been identified by the local authority as 'lead teachers' and asked to support other schools, in recognition of their good work.
- School leaders have developed a good system to track and record pupils' attainment and progress in each year group for English and mathematics. The information is captured every term, analysed carefully by the assessment leader and used to identify trends in the performance of groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, and individuals. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are compared in school and with other local schools to ensure that judgements are reliable and consistent. Leaders' assessments of teaching and learning have also been validated by external reviews and input from the local authority adviser.
- Pupils at Wessex Primary benefit from a broad range of subjects, enriched by a wide variety of well-attended after-school clubs, such as for drums, dancing and football, trips and visits. Parents are given termly newsletters that explain what will be taught and how they can help their children. There has been an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and on introducing the new national curriculum in these subjects. Staff have worked hard to introduce arrangements to assess pupils' attainment and progress against the new curriculum's expectations in English and mathematics. New schemes of work and performance indicators have been written for these subjects and used well in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders plan to introduce such schemes for all other subjects and have made a start with science, but this is at an early stage.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. It is incorporated into the life of the school and the 10 Wessex values, which are known by pupils and promoted during assemblies and in lessons. All staff have a commitment to equal opportunities and to ensuring that no pupil falls behind and that discriminatory language is not tolerated. Pupils are taught about different faiths and cultures and visit places of worship. They show respect and tolerance towards others. They are learning also to respect the environment, as demonstrated by the ECO team who pick up rubbish and make sure that energy is not wasted. Pupils are being prepared well for life in modern Britain through learning about democracy, for example with voting for school council members. They learn about the rule of law, for example in personal, social, emotional and health lessons and in history where they discuss crime and punishment.
- The school has been vigilant about its use of funds to support disadvantaged pupils; the funds have been used to good effect and are helping to close the gap for these pupils. The funds are used for a range of additional support such as one-to-one and small-group support, after-school clubs and Easter and summer schools. The school also pays for school trips, clubs and residential to improve pupils' social and emotional skills and provide experiences that help with academic work. The impact of additional support for disadvantaged pupils is reviewed regularly and adjusted as necessary.
- The additional funds for physical education and sports have been used well and helped to raise pupils' standards and improve participation in physical activities. The funds were used to purchase a new

physical education scheme and to provide training that has improved teachers' expertise in teaching physical education. The school also purchased a 'playpod' for lunchtime activities, which has increased children's participation in sport. Lunchtime supervisors have also received training in how to engage children in sustained physical activities. Talented pupils have been identified as sports ambassadors and they proudly help coach their peers.

- The local authority has provided timely and well-regarded support to the school. Governors are very positive about the help the authority has provided relating to staff recruitment and their own training. The authority has every confidence in the school and in the way that it has been led and managed.
- Leaders recognise that not all subjects are currently led as effectively as English and mathematics. The leaders for subjects other than literacy and numeracy are not tracking pupils' achievements as rigorously or monitoring the quality of work in pupils' books or in lessons as thoroughly. Subject leaders in these subjects are not yet having as much impact as those for English and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance is a real strength and has contributed significantly to improvements seen in the last few years. Governors are highly ambitious for the school. They have a good range of expertise, such as in finance and human resources, which they use to good effect. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and how the latter are being tackled. They are kept well informed by the comprehensive and clear information about standards, for example, provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They undertake regular visits and their own scrutiny of data to provide them with an independent view of standards.
  - Governors hold leaders to account by asking very challenging and probing questions, for example in relation to the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others in school. Governors have contributed to the improvement plan and track progress regularly. They oversee the appraisal processes of staff and the headteacher very effectively and ensure that movement up the pay scale is warranted. They responded promptly to issues raised in the review of governance in 2014, which identified governance as 'good to outstanding'.
  - They are constantly seeking ways to improve their contribution, through, for example, self-assessment processes. They ask themselves at the end of each meeting 'what difference have we made?', which is good practice. They also keep parents well informed through newsletters, the website and attendance at events such as parents' evenings.
  - Governors ensure that finances are managed carefully and prudently. The funds for disadvantaged pupils and the sports premium are tracked closely and the impact of their use is evaluated.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All aspects are very effectively managed. Staff have received all appropriate training, including in the 'Prevent' duty, and are well aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding. The school has provided sessions for parents, for example in how to keep children safe when using the internet.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved steadily over time and is now consistently good across all year groups.
- Teachers plan their teaching carefully based on the new national curriculum expectations. They organise activities in reading, writing and mathematics to meet pupils' different starting points and abilities. Teaching is often lively and engages pupils' interest and attention. Relationships are positive and teachers manage behaviour subtly and effectively.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use this to good effect when asking questions and introducing new ideas. They use technical terms accurately and encourage pupils to do the same. There is a good and consistent focus on language. Pupils are expected to answer in full correct sentences. Words are emphasised and explored in all subjects; for example, in a Year 6 science lesson, the teacher asked pupils if they could work out what 'microbiology' meant by breaking down the word.
- Teachers are keeping track of how well pupils are learning, in lessons and over time. They adjust teaching if they notice that some pupils are struggling. Pupils' work in books is checked regularly and feedback can be seen to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Reading, including phonics (the sound that letters make) is taught well, so that pupils make rapid progress. Parents are given useful advice on how to help children read at home and contribute to their children's reading records.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability, including those who are hearing impaired, are given

additional help when necessary in a timely and effective way by teachers and progress assistants. Teachers make good use of microphones and pass these to pupils so that hearing impaired pupils are fully engaged in class discussions.

- The progress assistants offer effective support in lessons and in small groups. Their questioning is good and they are careful not to do too much for the pupils they are supporting; they encourage them to be independent where possible.
- The classroom environment includes lively displays that are used well by staff to record key points in pupils' current and recent learning. Pupils refer to them when they get stuck for ideas or words.
- The most-able pupils are taught well in reading, writing and mathematics. They are often given work that really stretches them and makes them think hard. They respond well to challenging work.
- Work in books indicates that pupils are usually given the same activities regardless of their starting points in subjects other than English and mathematics.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Several parents and staff spoke effusively about the way that the school cares for pupils' individual needs and welfare. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy and parents agree. The secure and caring school environment enables pupils to confidently ask questions in class and to be prepared to make mistakes.
- Pupils show tolerance towards others and are respectful. They are polite and friendly, holding doors open for others, and are happy to talk about their work. They cooperate well in pairs and small groups from an early age. A parent said, 'they teach children manners and respect and kindness'. The respect that pupils show towards those with a disability is exemplary.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and they respond well to being given challenging tasks. A parent, commenting on how much her child enjoyed school, said, 'It is great to see my child eagerly running into school every day'.
- Pupils are taught how to stay safe, including from bullying, which they say is rare and dealt with quickly by staff. There have been sessions for pupils and parents on internet safety.
- Pupils are given a range of responsibilities, which they undertake sensibly, for example as head boy and girl, house captains, sports ambassadors and school council members. The ECO teams take responsibility for giving 'eco points' to staff who remember to turn off lights in their rooms when they leave. The ECO team is also involved in growing vegetables in school and selling them to parents.
- Pupils are taught about how to stay fit and healthy. The well-attended breakfast club provides a healthy start to the day as well as opportunities for pupils to engage in games and activities that develop social skills.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Arrangements for transfer to secondary school, for example, are well organised and pupils feel confident about moving on.
- Staff know pupils well and are vigilant about ensuring their care and welfare. The local authority's 'virtual head' who oversees the welfare of children in care or foster homes was full of praise for the way that the school looks after these children. She described the school's support as 'phenomenal' and a model for other schools.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. All staff and the vast majority of parents agree that pupils behave well. Pupils behave sensibly and responsibly in classrooms and around the school, including play times. Their good behaviour was tested thoroughly during the inspection, as it rained almost solidly for two days.
- Pupils respond to adults' instructions promptly and without fuss. They settle quickly to work. They take pride in the presentation of work in their exercise books.
- Occasionally, a few pupils lose focus in lessons, usually during whole-class discussions. A small number of pupils commented that there are one or two who sometimes needed to be reminded by teachers to behave well. However, poor behaviour is rare and there have been no permanent exclusions in the past few years and only one recent short fixed-term exclusion.
- Attendance has been sustained around the national average, or just above, for the past few years. There are relatively few pupils whose attendance is a concern and they are followed up swiftly. The school reacts promptly and communicates well with parents to encourage good attendance.

## Outcomes for pupils

## are good

- Pupils are making at least good progress in all year groups in reading, writing and mathematics, as a result of the good teaching in these areas. Standards have risen steadily at the end of key stages 1 and 2 over the last few years. In 2015, the key stage 1 results were around the national averages in reading and mathematics and well above in writing. School leaders' efforts to improve writing in this key stage have been effective. Children are encouraged to write from the early years, and older pupils are given regular opportunities to write at length. The quality and quantity of their writing and neatness of their handwriting improve markedly as they move through key stages 1 and 2.
- Results in 2015 for the end of key stage 2 were around the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics, but were well above for spelling, grammar and punctuation. The proportion of pupils that made and exceeded expected progress was above average in all areas.
- The school's good focus on speaking and listening is helping pupils to develop their literacy skills. It is also proving particularly beneficial for the small but increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language; these pupils are progressing well throughout the school. Pupils, including those with a hearing impairment, are developing as confident and articulate speakers.
- Pupils make steady progress in reading through the effective teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and access to a good range of books. Results in the Year 1 phonics reading check have risen each year and were above average in 2015. Pupils enjoy reading and happily talk about their books and authors.
- Pupils are developing mathematical skills well through the school. There is a good emphasis on mathematical language and on pupils explaining how they worked something out. Pupils are growing in confidence at solving mathematical problems involving real-life situations and becoming more fluent at recalling number facts and times-tables. Pupils enjoy mathematics and one boy wrote in his book, 'I love algebra!' after he had solved a challenging question set by his teacher.
- The most-able pupils are often given work that really stretches them and enables them to achieve well. The proportion of pupils reaching above expected levels at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was above average in reading, writing and mathematics last year; several pupils also reached the very high Level 6. Able pupils respond with enthusiasm to challenging tasks. For example, Year 4 pupils initially struggled to solve a complicated mathematical puzzle, but persevered until they succeeded. They are prepared to make and learn from mistakes; as one boy excitedly said, 'I got it wrong, but know why now!' Pupils in Year 3 spoke confidently about grammatical structure and use of adverbs. Some able pupils in Year 2 sensibly discussed features of different types of cars and showed an awareness of environmental issues as well as consideration of the views of others.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good and sometimes rapid and accelerated progress. Resources such as microphones are used well to ensure that pupils with hearing impairments are able to join in discussions effectively.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well known to all staff and supported in a number of ways to ensure that they make rapid progress. The number of these pupils is relatively small and they often also have additional needs. The gap between their standards and others in school has fluctuated in the past, but is generally reducing. In 2015, disadvantaged pupils made as good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as others nationally from most starting points. They are making similar progress to their peers in school.
- Pupils' progress in non-core subjects (for example, science, history and geography) is not as good as in English and mathematics. School leaders and governors have identified this as an area for improvement and have started to tackle it in science. Pupils enjoy science and are given a reasonable amount of practical investigative work. Progress is limited for some pupils in science and other non-core subjects because all pupils regardless of ability are generally given the same activities; the work is sometimes too challenging for some and too easy for others.

## Early years provision

## is good

- The early years provision is led and managed effectively. Staff work well together and look after children's individual needs with care and kindness. All aspects of children's safety and security are rigorously attended to. The new leader has a clear plan for how to improve provision further.
- Staff involve the parents well through, for example, regular communication, training sessions and

information on how parents can help their children at home. There are Friday 'stay and play' sessions for parents and opportunities for them to contribute to their child's portfolio of achievements (learning journeys).

- Children join the Nursery and Reception classes with a range of skills and knowledge, broadly typical for their age. In response to the good and well-targeted teaching, children make at least good progress across all the areas of learning, including literacy and numeracy. Phonics is taught well and children enjoy sounding out the letters.
- Children are prepared well for moving to Year 1 and the transition is managed smoothly and effectively. The proportion leaving the Reception classes with a good level of development has risen sharply over the past few years and was above the national average in 2015 and is on track to do so this year.
- Improving the interaction between staff and children was a school focus for recent training, with evident success. The way that adults talk to children and ask them questions to develop their language and knowledge is very effective and contributes to children's good progress.
- The early years classrooms and outside spaces are well organised and provide inviting and stimulating spaces for children to play and develop skills in all the areas of learning. Children enjoy making bows and arrows and painting, inspired by the 'castle' theme. Children behave well and respond quickly to adults' instructions. They are learning to make choices and persevere well on tasks, such as dropping cars down plastic pipes to see how far they travel. They play well together; for example, three girls, who were role-playing as doctors, discussed how they should 'bandage' a patient.
- Staff regularly observe and record children's achievements and ensure that each one makes good progress. Those children who speak English as an additional language receive focused support, as do those with special educational needs or disability. The most-able children respond well to the 'challenge tasks' they are given. Adults work hard, with much success, to close the gaps between the achievements of pupils who are eligible for additional funding and others in school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109821
<b>Local authority</b>	Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012267

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	478
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Katheryn Russell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nick Stevens
<b>Telephone number</b>	01628 626724
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<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:office@wessexprimary.org">office@wessexprimary.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5–6 June 2014

## Information about this school

- Wessex Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two forms of entry in each year group, including two full-time Reception classes. There is a part-time Nursery and specially resourced provision for hearing-impaired pupils, currently catering for 14 pupils aged three to 11.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than the national average. Pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support disadvantaged pupils.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is above average.
- Over three-quarters of pupils are of White British heritage, with small numbers of pupils from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is a breakfast club that is run by the governing body. After-school provision is run by another organisation and is subject to a separate inspection.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in each class, with all observations alongside the headteacher or one of the deputy headteachers. Inspectors observed two assemblies, the breakfast club and some after-school clubs.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' current work in all subjects and year groups, often alongside a senior leader. They spoke with pupils in arranged meetings, during lessons and during lunch and breaktimes. They listened to pupils read and spoke with them about their reading habits.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants (called progress assistants).
- Inspectors met with five members of the governing body. An inspector met with the local authority education adviser who has been working with the school this year and spoke on the phone with the local authority 'virtual head' for children in care.
- Inspectors talked to parents in the playground at the start of the day.
- A range of school documents were studied, including information about pupils' progress and attainment, minutes of governing body meetings, the school improvement plan, the self-evaluation report, safeguarding documents and records, attendance and behaviour records, policies, records of the monitoring of teaching, and information relating to teachers' performance targets and training.
- Inspectors took account of the 110 responses and written comments of parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 46 questionnaires completed by staff online. They also took account of the school's own staff, parents' and pupils' surveys.

## Inspection team

Helena McVeigh, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Deirdre Crutchley	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Metcalfe	Ofsted Inspector

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