

Writtle Infant School

Lodge Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3HZ

Inspection dates

30 November–1 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They take effective action to improve areas of weakness.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They challenge leaders effectively and play an important role in the ongoing improvement of the school.
- Most pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Provision in the early years is a strength of the school. Skilled leadership and strong teaching mean that children learn well and behave well.
- Pupils leave the early years with attainment above the national average.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school is good. Teachers' secure subject knowledge, good planning and effective use of resources help most pupils to make good progress.
- Some pupils do not make as much progress as they could in key stage 1. This is because work does not precisely meet the needs of the most and least able.
- Pupils behave well. There is very little disruption to learning. Pupils are polite and well mannered.
- Leaders are effective at promoting pupils' physical well-being. They make good use of the physical education and sports premium funding to increase pupils' participation in sports.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 by:
 - routinely monitoring the progress of pupils with different starting points to identify if any fall behind, and intervening to support them if they do
 - adapting teaching to meet precisely the needs of pupils with different starting points.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have maintained the good quality of education that pupils receive. They take timely steps to secure improvements. For example, teachers and leaders now have dedicated time together to plan and coordinate their work. Teachers learn from each other and deepen their expertise. As a result, teaching is of a consistently high standard across the school.
- Leaders have taken effective steps to improve outcomes in phonics. In the past, teachers across the school did not follow the same phonics scheme. Within year groups, there was variation in the way in which adults taught phonics. Leaders recently put in place one programme which runs throughout the school. As a result, pupils now follow a logical sequence of learning and make good progress.
- Teaching is enhanced by the effective training that teachers receive, such as opportunities to observe and share best practice. When teachers move to teach in different year groups, they are given time and guidance to help them prepare for the different age range of pupils. Teachers have the right skills to teach the pupils in their classes. Teaching is good in all year groups.
- Pupils benefit from a wide-ranging extra-curricular programme. Leaders tailor clubs to the interests of pupils. Science, cheerleading, gymnastics and fun fitness are examples of the sorts of activities which pupils can be involved in. Leaders monitor the attendance at, and impact of, these activities. Some 93% of pupils attended at least one club or activity last academic year. Leaders ensure that pupils' education is enhanced by their participation outside lessons; pupils' mental recall improved as a result of 'maths club', for example.
- Leaders make good use of the physical education and sports premium. Pupils are encouraged to participate in sport through sessions delivered by coaches in areas such as dance, basketball, hockey and tennis. Staff are trained so they can sustain high-quality physical education into the future. Pupils participate regularly in sports. They have three compulsory lessons each week and there is a high uptake of extra-curricular sporting activities. Nine out of 10 pupils participated in extra-curricular sport last academic year. As a result, pupils' physical well-being is enhanced.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developed through a topic-based curriculum. Pupils learn about the spiritual side of Christmas through assemblies and lessons, and about different ways of living through their work on different places in the world, for example. Pupils develop a solid understanding of the world around them.
- While leaders have taken effective actions to secure strong progress for most pupils, some pupils do not make as much progress as others. This is because, in key stage 1, leaders do not monitor the progress of groups as closely as they could.

Governance of the school

- Governors are fully involved in the school. They see for themselves how much progress pupils are making. For example, they speak with pupils, accompany the headteacher

for some monitoring activities and are in contact with the local authority adviser. Governors also undertake their own analysis of the data they are given.

- Governors accurately identify areas on which to seek clarification and hold leaders to account well. They are effective in helping leaders to improve the school.
- Governors play a valuable role in keeping pupils safe, such as thorough monitoring of how leaders keep pupils safe. Governors check to ensure that appointment procedures are accurately followed. They review how well records of safeguarding concerns are kept, and they speak to staff and pupils about pupils' well-being. Governors look at the outcomes of safeguarding audits and join in health and safety walks.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders' systems for reporting and monitoring safeguarding concerns are clear and easy to follow. Records are kept centrally, and leaders are able to see quickly if any patterns emerge. Leaders act in a timely fashion to protect children and are vigilant in seeking and securing the support of external agencies when required. Leaders' robust practices keep children safe.
- Pupils know whom to talk to if they are upset or have concerns. They said that they would tell a teacher if they were worried about themselves or a friend. They reported that bullying is dealt with well and that they feel safe. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, agreed that their child is happy and safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers prepare lessons well. They have strong subject knowledge and make good use of the time available. Teachers use effective resources to help pupils to learn. As a result, most pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well during lesson time.
- Teachers often use questions skilfully to check what pupils know and to help pupils develop their understanding further. A mix of open and closed questions helps pupils to deepen and consolidate their understanding.
- Pupils work well with teachers in, for example, pronouncing sounds in phonics lessons or subtracting numbers in mathematics. Teachers are able to identify and rectify misconceptions quickly. This means that most pupils learn well and make strong progress over time.
- Pupils are generally enthusiastic about their learning. They want to participate and to learn. For example, inspectors saw pupils responding well to the suspenseful atmosphere created in the early years, and to 'show me' boards in Year 2. This is common in lessons across the school. Pupils participate well because teaching is well considered and interesting to them.
- Teachers and support staff give the right amount of help to pupils who have additional needs. For example, staff assess and provide effective resources for pupils who have speech and language difficulties. They track the progress the pupils make and step in

to provide extra help when it is required.

- Teachers make good use of discussions between pupils. Pupils share their ideas and reasoning with each other well. Through conversations, pupils develop a firmer understanding of what they are taught. For example, children in the early years strengthen their use of phonics by practising sounds with a friend.
- While most pupils' needs are well met by teachers, the work that teachers set in key stage 1 is sometimes not closely matched to what pupils already know and can do. In mathematics, for example, some pupils continue to complete work which they have already mastered, while others struggle to gain a good understanding before moving on to the next topic. This means that pupils with the highest and lowest starting points, including disadvantaged pupils, do not make as much progress as the majority of pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are appropriately supervised throughout the day. Adults interact well with pupils during breaktimes, helping them to play nicely with each other. As a result, the school environment is safe and a nice place to be. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe.
- Leaders take good care of pupils' physical and mental well-being. They run a health and well-being week. Pupils participate in sessions on physical fitness, mental health and healthy eating. Leaders put on sessions for parents as well as for pupils about mindfulness. Pupils in the past have been inspired by their work to produce a fitness video. Participation in sports clubs is high. Pupils are motivated by leaders to look after themselves.
- Bullying is rare and, when it does happen, is dealt with well by adults.
- Pupils understand that not all people are the same. They learn about different cultures and places. They said that it is OK to be different. Speaking to inspectors, one pupil summed up the views of his group by saying, 'You might not be the same, but you can still be friends.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen to teachers and work well together. Pupils respond best when the work they do is closely matched to their needs. When this happens, pupils are enthusiastic and engrossed in their learning. Very little learning time is lost to poor behaviour.
- Pupils are confident learners. They are happy to volunteer answers and to discuss their thoughts with other pupils. They are willing to risk being wrong. This enables pupils to try out ideas and to learn from each other.

- Pupils play and interact together well. They are polite to each other and to adults. The atmosphere around the school is calm and friendly.
- The attendance of groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, which was previously too low, has improved markedly. The attendance of these pupils is now in line with others in the school and better than the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the early years was in line with the national average. This represented an improvement on outcomes in 2015. In 2017, children achieved even more highly and above the national average. Children made good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders, teachers and other adults have a good understanding of what individual children currently in the early years know and can do. Adults provide tailored support based on the needs of children. As a result, children continue to make good progress.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 in 2016 and in 2017 was below the national average. The organisation of phonics teaching has been adjusted to ensure that pupils undertake a more logical sequence of learning. All adults involved in teaching phonics now work to the same scheme. As result, pupils currently in the school are making good progress in phonics.
- Most pupils in key stage 1 in 2016 and 2017 made good progress. The outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 1 in 2016 and 2017 were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils currently in the school are making strong progress from their starting points. In reading, writing and mathematics, most pupils quickly and securely develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. However, because the work they do is at times not precisely matched to their individual starting points, pupils in key stage 1 with the highest and lowest starting points do not make as much progress as others in the school.
- Pupils who have additional learning needs, including those with an education, health and care plan or those who have speech and language difficulties, respond well to the extra help that they receive. They settle well to learning and can apply the knowledge and skills that they have learned.

Early years provision

Good

- Through rigorous and regular monitoring, leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development in the early years. Leaders provide training to develop staff and act to improve any area where provision is not up to their high standards. As a result, the quality of education in the early years is a strength of the school.
- Leaders' chosen approach to planning in the early years enables teachers to respond effectively to children's likes and interests. Teachers and learning support assistants combine this awareness of what pupils enjoy with an accurate understanding of the

skills and abilities of the children. They match teaching well to the needs of children. Teachers and other adults are effective in supporting children to move forward from their own individual starting points. As a result, children in the early years make good progress.

- Teachers effectively provide opportunities for children to combine phonics, spelling and handwriting. They provide targeted support, which enables most children to use their phonic skills to read and spell new words. Phonics is well understood by teachers and accurately taught. Children develop strong phonic skills and are well prepared to continue through Year 1.
- Outcomes in the early years have improved over time to their current strong position. Children currently in the early years make good progress across the curriculum, including in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years are well behaved and work in a calm and purposeful manner. When they do become distracted, adults are effective at bringing them back to the task quickly. Children answer questions willingly. They are not afraid to make mistakes. They play cooperatively and they take account of other children's ideas. Children are well supported in their personal development, behaviour and welfare.

School details

Unique reference number	114917
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10036153

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ralph Bray
Headteacher	Helen Castell
Telephone number	01245 420963
Website	www.writtle-inf.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@writtle-inf.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the use of pupil premium funding on its website.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of lessons for all classes, sometimes accompanied by the school's senior leaders, to observe pupils' learning and progress. They also reviewed the work of a range of pupils in their books.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders and four members of the governing body. A discussion took place with a local authority representative by telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils in groups and individually across different age groups.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and spending plans. They also looked at the school's behaviour and attendance records and its pupil progress tracking information.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's single central record of recruitment checks for staff.
- Inspectors considered 56 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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