

Westlands Community Primary School

Beeches Close, Chelmsford, CM1 2SB

Inspection dates 3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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 and the other leaders are highly committed and ambitious for the continued success of this improving school.
- Leaders have very good oversight of pupils' progress and teachers' work which ensures that pupils make at least good progress across the school.
- The governing body tracks the work of the school closely and holds the leaders to account well for the performance of the school.
- Pupils in all year groups make rapid progress in reading and mathematics, often from low starting points. Progress in writing is good, although not as strong as in reading and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils' levels of attainment are in line with those found nationally.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some that is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what most pupils can achieve.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are at early stages of learning English are supported very effectively in their learning and development. This enables them to settle quickly and to make rapid progress.
- Children in the Reception classes benefit from an exciting and well-planned learning environment and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent, both in and out of the classroom. They concentrate fully on their work and say they feel very safe at school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively through a range of subjects, including religious studies, art, music and sporting activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Sometimes, the most-able pupils are not stretched sufficiently, especially in writing. Consequently, they do not always achieve as well as they can.
- In mathematics, marking does not consistently guide pupils to understand how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons, four of which were joint lesson observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. In addition, they made a number of other short visits to lessons and observed small groups of pupils taught by teaching assistants. The inspectors also listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 read to them.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, a representative of the local authority and the school's independent consultant.
- The inspectors took account of 47 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), parents' comments and 59 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also considered the views of parents they spoke to at the start of the day as they brought their children into school.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, the school's evaluation of its performance, school improvement planning, documentation relating to teachers' performance over time and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Carpenter

Additional Inspector

Patrick Walsh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportions that come from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are average.
- Approximately a third of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. This is an above-average proportion.
- Around a tenth of the pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- An above average proportion of pupils join the school throughout the year in all classes, especially in Years 3 to 6. Many of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' achievement to outstanding in writing by making sure that teachers consistently set tasks that are sufficiently demanding for the most-able pupils.
- Ensure that marking in mathematics gives all pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team, with the support of the governing body, knows exactly how to move the school forward. Leaders have successfully secured improvements in teaching and in pupils' achievement, in their rates of attendance and behaviour, and in the standard of its work to ensure pupils are kept safe.
- Systems for checking pupils' progress are rigorous. Senior and subject leaders use the tracking information effectively to plan well-targeted support for any individuals who are at the risk of falling behind in their learning. Subject leaders are effective in supporting teachers in planning and teaching.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching effectively. Teachers' performance is managed efficiently. Staff are set challenging performance targets and held accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes which are appropriately linked to their professional development.
- The school is accurate in identifying its strengths and areas for development. Leaders identified that standards in writing were not as strong as those in reading and mathematics and took decisive actions to address this. As a result, progress in writing has accelerated over the past year. School data show that for every year group, progress in writing has responded to the initiatives introduced to accelerate it, so that it is now good throughout the school.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of their community and modern Britain. There is a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills as well as the very effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues are taught very successfully through assemblies and religious studies, supporting pupils to reflect on the connections between spirituality and action in their own lives. Pupils are taught to respect the values of others and that any form of discrimination is wrong.
- The primary sports funding is used well to employ specialist coaches who provides additional sporting provision in and after school and training for staff to enhance their expertise. The funds have also been used to extend the opportunities for competitive sports for all pupils. As a result, pupil participation is now high and pupils enjoy a range of inter-school competitions.
- The school's systems for safeguarding and ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed are good. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the pupils for whom it is intended and gaps in performance are closing. Vulnerable pupils and those who are at the early stages of learning English are supported very effectively, enabling these pupils to make good progress.
- The local authority has provided effective support that reflects the school's good performance. Membership of the local schools cluster group enables the school to share and develop good practice.
- The school has a close partnership with parents. They are well supported through a range of meetings and workshops to understand how they can help their children's learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well and understands the priorities for the school to continue to improve. Governors are skilled and are able both to challenge and support the leaders well. They review the performance of the school and are actively involved in the evaluation of the school's work and in development planning.
 - Governors understand performance data and judge the school's performance compared to schools nationally. They monitor the school's finances carefully, including the use of the pupil premium to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They are well aware of the link between teachers' performance and salary progression.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This reflects the school's strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are very proud of their school and welcoming to visitors. They value the diversity of culture and religion and the friendly environment within their school and are being taught well to understand British values. For example, a group of pupils explained in an interview that it is good to have friends from so many nationalities because this gives them greater understanding of modern Britain.
- The school's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are comprehensive and applied consistently. As a result, pupils display high levels of self-discipline in and out of the classroom. Virtually all parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire agreed.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities such as being members of the school council and raising funds for national and international charities. Pupils from Year 6 interviewed a member of the European parliament and also the local member of parliament and raised the pertinent local environmental issues that are yet to be addressed.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel extremely safe and very well cared for by all the adults in the school.
- Pupils have excellent understanding of the different types of bullying. They say bullying is very rare and that, should it occur, it is quickly dealt with, ensuring that pupils feel totally safe and secure. They are very aware of the dangers of the misuse of the internet and social networking sites.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of the risks they face in their everyday lives; for example, they are well aware of cyber-bullying and issues relating to misuse of drugs. They know what to do if they should encounter any such situation. They have a mature understanding of a range of bullying issues that pupils of their age may encounter, and what to do about them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers know their pupils very well and have high expectations of their behaviour and work. As a result, pupils listen carefully and respond very well. The relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are excellent, resulting in a very positive climate for learning in all classrooms.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questions very effectively to check pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking skills. In a mixed class of Years 5 and 6, pupils were absorbed in the task of writing a persuasive text suggesting alternative transports other than cars. A similar level of engagement was observed in a Year 6 lesson where pupils had to think carefully to differentiate the features of short stories from long stories. In both lessons they enjoyed discussing with their partners the different styles and characteristics of a range of texts, deepening their understanding of the structures of their own writing.
- Pupils read a range of stories and information texts which enhance their understanding of characters and of different styles of text. Teaching assistants are directed effectively in lessons to provide additional support which is particularly helpful for pupils who have learning difficulties or who are at the early stages of learning English.
- In many lessons teachers provide a variety of different work that matches the capabilities of different groups of pupils. However, in a minority of cases, they do not make effective use of the information they have about what pupils already know and can do to ensure that work is hard enough for the most-able, especially in writing. Consequently, most-able pupils do not always achieve the standards of which they are capable in writing.

- Marking of pupils' work is exemplary in English and provides very effective guidance for next steps. This is not so in mathematics where pupils do not consistently receive clear guidance on how to improve their work or what they need to learn next.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in Reception with skills that are low in comparison to those typical for their age, especially in communication and language development. They make good progress. Skills learned in the early years are built on through the school.
- Pupils make good progress in writing; their progress in reading and mathematics is rapid. Progress has accelerated markedly over the past two years in all areas, showing significant improvement over the 2012 results. By the end of Years 2, pupils reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with the national average.
- By the end of Year 6 standards are average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. The work in current pupils' books shows pupils' progress in writing has accelerated and the shortfall has been made up.
- The most-able pupils make at least good progress in all areas, especially in reading and mathematics. They develop a clear understanding of how to write effectively for different purposes and analyse different styles of writing by a range of well-known and popular authors. In mathematics, they use calculation skills fluently to solve problems. However, progress is not better than good in writing because tasks provided for the most able are not all designed to get the best out of them. Although an average proportion of pupils gained the highest Level 6 in writing in 2014, fewer than average gained Level 5.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs as well as those at the early stages of learning English are given effective support through intervention programmes that meet their learning needs. As a result, they make rapid progress from their often low starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils, who are supported by the pupil premium, achieve standards in line with their classmates. This is due to very effective support for them in small groups and on a one-to-one basis. In 2014, the gaps, within the school, between these pupils' attainment and others at the end of Year 6 were one term behind in reading and writing and nearly two terms behind in mathematics and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The gaps between the attainment of these pupils and other pupils nationally were approximately one term behind in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. In writing these pupils were three terms behind; the gap in this area has narrowed since 2013.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years is good and provides children with an enjoyable, safe and secure learning environment. Adults provide a very high level of care, guidance and support. This ensures that children feel very safe and secure and are ready to learn.
- Children make good progress in the Reception Year, despite an increasing number joining the school in the second and third terms of the school year. A welcoming environment, good teaching and stimulating resources support their learning and development well, accelerating their progress, often from low starting points. Children are well-prepared for Year 1 because they acquire good learning habits. Even though progress is good, the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception is below the national average.
- Staff provide a range of engaging activities that captures children's imagination and moves their learning on quickly. They encourage children to become confident in pursuing indoor and outdoor activities that match their own interests as well as those directed by adults.
- Behaviour is excellent. Children have an excellent and caring relationship with their teachers and learning

support assistants. They are confident in speaking to the adults, sharing concerns and celebrating their achievements. They listen carefully, support one another and are starting to take on simple responsibilities, such as tidying up, often without prompting. They know the school routines and respond well to them.

- Regular teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) supports children well in rapidly developing their reading and writing skills. Children develop good coordination and personal skills as they explore the well-organised indoor and outdoor activities. Disabled children and those who have special educational needs are very well integrated and benefit from good support from skilled teaching assistants.
- The school works in close contact with families, from before their children start, and throughout their time at school. The vast majority of parents, consulted during the inspection at the start of the day, stated that their contributions are valued and that they are very happy with school's work with their children.

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	115027
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	449345

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	461
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Norton
Headteacher	Gill Bennison
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
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