

Wheatcroft Primary School

Stanstead Road, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 7HQ

Inspection dates 8–9 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is good school

- Pupils are highly motivated and apply themselves to their learning quickly. They make good progress and attain standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers carefully check the progress of all pupils, with the result that all groups do well.
- Pupils are happy, behave well and know how to keep themselves safe in a wide variety of circumstances. They thrive in the safe environment provided by the school.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences, which contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The governing body is organised well and is effective in carrying out its role. Strong leadership at all levels within the school, including governors, has ensured that teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is consistently good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The new marking policy is not yet consistently applied. This means that some pupils do not have a clear understanding of how to improve their work across all subjects.
- While they do well, the gap in attainment and progress between those pupils who have disability or a special educational need and those in other groups is still relatively wide.
- A small minority of parents do not have confidence in the leadership and management of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or part-lessons. Two lessons were observed with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and subject leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including: the school’s own tracking of pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding pupils and the school’s view of its own performance.
- Inspectors took account of pupils’ work in books, listened to them reading and met with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in class, at break time and at other times around the school.
- One assembly was attended.
- Inspectors took account of 74 replies to Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire and correspondence from parents.

Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Thakur

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Rudman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The school admits 45 pupils annually, which means that some pupils are taught in mixed aged classes.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well below average.
- The proportions supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives money from the pupil premium grant is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school hosts a breakfast club and an independent pre- school. Both are subject to separate inspections.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - sharing and applying the good practice that already exists in the school to help teachers to make their performance even better
 - developing marking and feedback so that all pupils understand how to improve their work
 - sustaining the progress in narrowing the gap between pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and those in other groups.
- Raise parental awareness of the work of the school and their perceptions about how good it is.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

Good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are in line with those expected for their age, although some pupils have lower social, number, communication and language skills. Most of the children continue into the Reception classes where they make good progress and their skills develop well.
- The daily teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is helping to develop reading and writing skills, so that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading and writing is above average. Their attainment in mathematics is broadly average.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average and rising further. The overwhelming majority of pupils make the progress they should and some make much better than expected progress in reading and writing. This is an upward trend since the previous inspection, clearly shown by the school's assessments and the work in pupils' books.
- Pupils know their levels in mathematics and are highly motivated to do well. Close to half the pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to attain at higher than expected levels for their age.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make the same good progress as their classmates. The small number of pupils known to be eligible Year 6 last year means that it is not appropriate to comment on their attainment in comparison with others.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational need benefit from good support provided by well-trained teachers and teaching assistants. They make good progress from their starting points in mathematics, reading, English grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, because their classmates achieve highly the gap between them remains large. School leaders and staff are working effectively to close this gap.
- The new primary sports funding is used well and offers opportunities for pupils and staff to develop skills and knowledge in physical education. Staff training has helped pupils excel in internal and external sporting activities and to enjoy some alternative sporting challenges. For example, rock climbing and sailing are enjoyed as extra activities.
- Pupils read with interest and show an enthusiasm for books. Reading is promoted well, with the result that reading standards are very high. Pupils who read to the inspector, regardless of age, read confidently, accurately and with enthusiasm. They used effective strategies to break down unfamiliar words using their knowledge of phonics.

The quality of teaching

Good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school and is having a positive effect on pupils' progress, especially in mathematics. This is because it has been a focus for improvement. Reading and writing are also taught well and pupils make good progress.
- Teachers capture and hold pupils' imaginations through well-planned activities and good use of resources. As a result, pupils remain engaged sustaining good levels of concentration as they tackle their work. For example, the Reception classes enjoyed a visit from a police officer and his police car. This stimulus was transferred into developing numeracy skills of doubling by using pictures of police cars to count.

- Teachers and support staff are good at using questions to check pupils' understanding of what they have to do and to help adjust their teaching according to the level of pupils' understanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well in partnership to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Importantly, pupils of all abilities have equal opportunities to respond to questions in class or group discussions.
- Teachers plan their lessons well to ensure that all abilities are challenged sufficiently to bring about improvements. In some lessons pupils are divided into six or seven ability groups, which offer work that is neither too easy nor too hard and allows them to make rapid progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation stage is good. Teachers plan well together to ensure that both indoor and outdoor learning is offered daily and that areas of learning which are considered to be weakest are developed through play and focused activities with the result that children make good progress.
- Teachers' marking has been an area that the school has worked on to improve since the previous inspection and there is some consistency across the school in the style and format according to pupils' age and abilities. However, this still requires further work because the best practice in marking is not yet regularly seen across all subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

Good

- The behaviour of pupils is consistently good in and around the school. Pupils are polite to each other and to all adults. They look after each other well and as one child said, 'We are like a family, a big team.'
- Pupils are highly motivated and settle to their learning quickly. They work with enthusiasm producing high quality work, in reading, writing and mathematics. However, on the few occasions where teaching is less effective, pupils become distracted.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy opportunities to explain their contribution to its community. For example, 'Green bees' recycling monitors, librarians, school councillors and buddy partners to younger pupils in the playground are just a few of their contributions.
- Each year the school council organises events to support two charities. They have sponsored an animal for Colchester Zoo and have also organised afternoon tea and Harvest gifts for the aged in the community, showing how much they are socially aware.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding arrangements meet all the current national requirements.
- Pupils say they feel safe, because behaviour is good in class and around the school. Instances of bullying are extremely rare. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying and are confident that staff would deal with it should it occur. They explained that on the rare occasions that pupils have quarrelled that mediation takes place and the whole class is then involved in discussing the issue; this helps to ensure it does not reoccur.
- Attendance is above average. This is because pupils enjoy being at school and robust systems are in place to follow up any absences.

- Most parents and carers are positive about behaviour and safety and say that their children are happy to come to school. Staff are also positive about these aspects and have good relationships with pupils.

The leadership and management

Good

- All leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of how to continue raising attainment and have successfully improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Senior leaders, subject leaders and those with whole school responsibility check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress regularly. Vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and offered additional support. Books are scrutinised regularly and teacher's planning checked to ensure work is sufficiently challenging for all abilities with the result that attainment is rising quickly.
- Training opportunities are offered that are linked closely to school improvement and to personal development. Teachers are fully aware that they have a part to play in raising pupils' attainment and that they are accountable for the progress their pupils make.
- The curriculum is strong with a wide variety of experiences offered to pupils. For example, in Key Stage 2 all year groups enjoy away from home overnight experiences. Trips include visits to Wales, the Isle of Wight and camping at an outdoor activities centre.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well through the curriculum. Examples of African and Indian story telling were seen in displays around the school. Year 6 pupils discussed Shakespeare's Macbeth with an inspector and a music lesson observed involved Gamelan music. Pupils learn to speak German, Spanish and French. Artwork around the school is impressive.
- The large majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire are happy with the school. However, a small minority do not have confidence in the leadership of the school.
- The additional funding provided by the government to help children to be more active and to improve their fitness is being used appropriately. Physical education consultants are helping teachers to develop their expertise. This has resulted in one teacher and one teaching assistant obtaining further qualifications. Additional resources are also being provided. For example, the hire of a climbing wall and the purchase of additional basketball posts.
- Arrangements to safeguard children meet all statutory requirements. Discrimination is not tolerated. School records confirm this and show a commendable commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities and for all pupils to reach their best.
- The school works in partnership with a group of primary schools and secondary schools to share good practice and develop the talents of more-able pupils.
- The local authority has supported the school well to enable them to develop their management skills. This work has included senior leaders, subject leaders, the governing body and the newly qualified teachers. As part of three visits a year, the school improvement partner has undertaken joint lesson observations with senior leaders and the Chair of Governors, scrutinised pupils books and examined school tracking data with the focus of ensuring that pupils make more than expected progress.

■ The governance of the school:

- Following the previous inspection the governors have undertaken considerable training. A skills audit ensured that the governing body offers a wide range of experience to enable them to understand their role in managing the school and its finances efficiently. In order to understand the quality of teaching and its impacts on pupils' attainment the Chair of Governors shadowed the school improvement partner to observe lessons. Governors talk to lead teachers and each governor is encouraged to visit the school at least once a term. School improvement is a regular agenda item for governing body meetings. Governors have all the most recent tracking data and are able to raise questions from it to challenge senior leaders. Other regular items on the agenda are the physical education grant and pupil premium funding. Governors understand how performance management is linked to the school development plan and raising achievement for everyone including the headteacher, and how performance links to pay.

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	117328
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	442029

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Young
Headteacher	Alisdair Skinner
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2013
Telephone number	01992 587899
Fax number	01992 586725
Email address	admin@wheatcroft.hert.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

