

Wheeler Lane Primary School

Wheeler Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham, B13 0SF

Inspection dates 8–9 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In most subjects, standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. The high standard of pupils' written work is a particular strength.
- Pupils make consistently good progress.
- As a result of good teaching, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress in developing their early learning skills, particularly in communication and language.
- Pupils enjoy school, are enthusiastic about learning and feel extremely safe.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding.
- Teachers' expectations are high. This is evident in the challenging work provided for pupils who are ready for it, and in the very high expectations set for pupils' written work.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium funding make increasingly good progress. Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and the progress they make, have improved and are now good.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress in extending their understanding of English.
- Good leadership has been sustained through the recent changes. Governors, senior leaders and managers are relentless in their efforts to improve teaching, achievement and opportunities for pupils.
- Governors are knowledgeable and effective. They challenge school leaders robustly in relation to standards and pupils' progress.
- This is a highly-cohesive and tolerant community where relationships are excellent and pupils and staff of all backgrounds work together to a common purpose.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 have not improved as much as those in English and in Key Stage 2. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills.
- While there is high-quality marking of writing, providing pupils with clear guidance as to what they need to do to improve, this good practice is not so evident in the marking of other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 34 lessons, eight of which were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, the school's senior and subject leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documents, including records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, the school improvement plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and the tracking of pupils' progress. They also looked closely at pupils' written work for the current school year, and listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

George Logan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Steven Cartlidge	Additional Inspector
Tracey Kneale	Additional Inspector
Michael Onyon	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wheelers Lane is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is a diverse community with many different nationalities represented. There are more pupils from White British or mixed-race backgrounds than from any other ethnic group, while pupils of Pakistani heritage form the largest minority ethnic group.
- Around one-third of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is an above-average proportion.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the additional funding known as pupil premium (for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed services) is well 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.
- The school has experienced some disruption in its leadership in the last year, with the retirement of the former headteacher and deputy headteacher in 2013. There was an interim headteacher in the autumn term. The current headteacher took up her post in January 2014. The Chair of the Governing Body was appointed on December 2013.
- The school offers a breakfast and an after-school care club. These are managed and inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate further the progress pupils make in mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to apply their mathematical skills both through practical activities within mathematical lessons and in other subjects.
- Ensure that pupils' work in mathematics and other subjects is as thorough as in English, and that teachers' marking shows pupils what they need to do to move their learning on even more rapidly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement had improved to be good in the period before the last inspection. The emerging strengths in progress and attainment identified at that time have been sustained.
- Children start in Nursery, and some join Reception directly, with skills below those expected for their age. A significant proportion of children have limited prior knowledge of English. Consistently good teaching, frequent opportunities to talk to and learn from knowledgeable adults and a stimulating learning environment all ensure that children make good progress. Generally, children leave Reception with knowledge and skill levels in line with those typically found, although outcomes were slightly lower in 2013. Staff make thorough checks on children's knowledge and skills to ensure that their learning is good.
- A key strength of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is the support for children who start school with limited English. These children are assisted to develop their communication and language skills so that they can more readily access the wider curriculum.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is slightly above average, particularly in reading. The trend of improvement has been stronger in reading and writing, both recent priorities, than in mathematics. School data and the work seen indicate that current pupils are making good progress, with many working at levels above those expected for their age.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average. An upward trend was particularly evident in 2013 in writing and in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The high quality of pupils' recorded work in English and mathematics indicates that standards continue to rise. The school has set as a particular priority the improvement of standards in mathematics in 2014, and several pupils are currently tackling the challenging Level 6, with a realistic prospect of success.
- Pupils supported by pupil premium funding in Year 6 in 2013 were around four terms behind the others in reading, writing and mathematics. School data indicates that the school has reduced the gap in the current year. These pupils are currently making more rapid progress than the others and the average gap is now just over one term.
- Pupils from Pakistani backgrounds achieve higher standards, and progress at a faster rate, than is typically found. This is also true of pupils learning English as an additional language, because of the priority given to the development of language and communication.
- An above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils attained the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2013. Improved teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is ensuring an improvement in pupils' knowledge of this key skill. This contributes to the good progress pupils make in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well and make progress that compares favourably with that in other schools. Pupils judged to be at school action plus and so requiring greater support, however, made slower than expected progress in 2013. Recent adjustments have ensured that they are now learning more rapidly. More-able pupils are very ambitious to succeed; they are well supported to achieve high standards.

The quality of teaching is good

- Senior leaders have been successful in ensuring a considerable degree of consistency of good teaching. Staff have similar high expectations of, for example, the quality of pupils' written work and of the progress pupils should make.
- Learning is most effective when teachers provide significant challenge. This was particularly evident in a fast-paced Year 6 mathematics lesson, where pupils were calculating the area and perimeter of compound shapes. The tasks were challenging and stimulating. Pupils engaged in creative discussion about the strategies they used. The most able pupils had work targeted at the higher Level 6. Pupils' commitment was outstanding.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from effective teaching, supporting good progress. Staff have a clear understanding of how to move children's learning on.
- Detailed tracking of progress and improved support this year ensure that pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding now make good progress.
- The teaching of reading is good. The teaching of phonics is effective and there are arrangements to give additional support to pupils who are identified as not having made sufficiently rapid progress. Pupils read confidently and with understanding.
- Where learning is slower, it is usually because teachers do not allow pupils to get on with their tasks quickly enough, which leads to some loss of momentum. Teachers do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in other subjects.
- The school has consistent systems for checking and improving pupils' progress. Marking is mostly thorough and indicates the next steps in learning, although this is more evident in the marking of writing than, for example, mathematics. Pupils have targets to identify the next steps in their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils display exemplary attitudes and their enthusiasm for learning contributes strongly to their good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. They respond with enthusiasm and determination in lessons.
- This highly-cohesive community is a role-model of respect and tolerance. Pupils have a tremendous pride in their school. Inappropriate behaviour is rare; there have been no recent exclusions. The school's highly-effective behaviour management systems ensure a consistent response to any issues. Few parents and carers who gave their views indicated any concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils eagerly undertake responsibilities within class and in the playground, thereby contributing to the smooth running of the school community.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements fully meet national requirements.
- Pupils are involved in ensuring that the school is safe. They are keen to know the identity of visitors. Pupils feel extremely safe and are confident that adults will manage any difficulties.

- Pupils have a good appreciation of a range of risks. Year 6 pupils understand how to keep themselves safe if, for example, cyber-bullying were to occur and so they are well prepared for secondary school.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils are aware bullying may take many forms, but feel sure that these will be addressed rigorously by the school.
- Attendance is currently above average. Persistent absence has been significantly reduced.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has a clear overview of the quality of teaching. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is thorough, taking account of all aspects of a teacher's work. This is supporting improvements in the school's performance management systems. These are comprehensive, rigorous and increasingly informed by aspirational targets and supported by good professional development opportunities. There is a close link between teachers' performance and their pay progression.
- The school's view of itself is accurate. School improvement plans reflect the correct priorities.
- Subject and other leaders have been given greater freedom to manage their subjects and to implement changes and now feel that they have greater opportunity to support staff and to actively drive further improvements. This is particularly evident in the leadership of mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Senior and subject leaders now monitor the impact of pupil premium funding more closely and adjust provision to ensure maximum impact. This funding is contributing to much-improved gains in learning for eligible pupils.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. There is a significant focus on literacy and numeracy, key priorities for the school. Science and art are strengths in some year groups. However, the potential to develop pupils' literacy and particularly their numeracy skills more extensively through work in other subjects is not strongly developed. Extra-curricular provision is good. Additional activities funded through the sports funding initiative have increased access to sports clubs.
- Planning for the use of the primary sports funding is effective. Targeted staff training is intended to ensure that initiatives can be sustained, while individual year groups are given intensive coaching in sports new to them, such as basketball. Competitive sport now has a higher profile.
- Support from the local authority has been effective in guiding the school through a period when the school lacked senior leadership.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is a high level of respect for all communities and cultures, and diversity is celebrated. Partnerships with other schools contribute well to the sharing of best practice. Links with parents and carers are good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Despite changes in leadership, the governing body has ensured stability and a smooth transition. Governors bring expertise and understanding, and provide a clear strategic

direction. They are realistic and are fully involved in school self-evaluation and school development planning. They undertake training and have a secure understanding of school and national performance. This enables them to accurately compare the school's performance with that of others. They have also identified where, with additional training, they might support the school even more. Minutes of governing body meetings show that governors hold school leaders to account. Governors are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching. They have ensured that pay and promotion are now closely aligned to evidence of teachers' effectiveness. Governors carefully evaluate the impact of decisions about the use of pupil premium funding to close gaps in pupils' attainment. Governors ensure, along with senior leaders, that all statutory duties are met.

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	134099
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	431488

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	682
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Straker-Welds
Headteacher	Sarah Pecheur
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2009
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