

Whissendine Church of England Primary School

Main Street, Whissendine, Oakham, LE15 7ET

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This school is a beacon of exceptional practice in all key areas of its work.
- Pupils are highly enthusiastic about learning at every age throughout the school and make outstanding progress.
- Pupils typically reach above-average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- The current Year 6 pupils are on track to gain the school's highest results ever. Many pupils are already reaching high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is mainly outstanding. It is consistently good or better in all subject areas and pupils of all capabilities are well catered for, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Consistently high-quality marking across all subjects, together with individual progress interviews, ensures that pupils make rapid gains in their learning.
- Behaviour is exemplary and pupils feel totally safe. Pupils demonstrate a very mature attitude to everything, including their learning.
- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. He has had a clear impact on raising the amount of outstanding teaching.
- The English and mathematics leadership teams have had a notable impact on increasing pupils' progress, particularly in the last 18 months.
- The exciting range of taught subjects and the school's innovative learning methods are particular strengths.
- The school uses an internet-based system well to enable pupils to continue their learning at home, but it is not yet consistently effective across the whole school.
- The governing body is particularly effective and holds the school to account very well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. A total of 14 lessons were observed, including three seen together with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. In addition, short classroom visits were made to observe pupils at work.
- Inspectors had discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other members of the school leadership team, teachers and two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including the school's tracking of pupils' progress, documents relating to safeguarding and special educational needs, case studies of individual pupils, and also the school's self-evaluation document which includes its improvement priorities.
- A wide range of pupils' work was reviewed across different subjects, and inspectors heard pupils of different ages reading.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 33 parents recorded on the online questionnaire (Parent View) and met informally with a number of parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also took into account 24 responses to the school's own survey of parents' views.

Inspection team

Kathryn Skan, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school is receiving additional income (the pupil premium) is below average. In this school it currently applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children of parents who are serving in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A before-school club takes place on the school site every morning. It is run by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since 2011 the school has been part of a federation of two schools which share the same headteacher and governing body.
- The headteacher has been at the school for a considerable time, and supports other schools including those in difficulty.
- The number of pupils is rising, and many come from outside the school's catchment area.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the internet system consistently well to further strengthen home-school links and help pupils to continue their learning at home, by:
 - providing further opportunities for pupils to practise learning such as mathematical problem solving and real-life investigation skills
 - creating shared areas of reference, such as a book review section where pupils could share enthusiasm for interesting or exciting books found in the school library with their classmates.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils make excellent progress. Children enter Reception with broadly typical skills for their age, although lately they have been higher in number skills and lower in communication skills. They reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave at Year 6.
- Children make outstanding progress in Reception and enter Key Stage 1 having made strong gains in all areas of learning. Last year, they reached especially high levels in linking sounds and letters, reading, physical development and creative development.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils consistently reach above-average standards in reading and mathematics, and even higher in writing. The results of the Year 1 national reading check on pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) were above average last year.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils usually reach high standards in English and mathematics. Currently, Year 6 pupils are achieving the best standards the school has ever seen with a good number expected to gain the new very high level in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do well whatever their level of ability, including more-able pupils. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make as much progress as their classmates. This is because teachers plan for their learning precisely and the school makes sure their specific needs are met. As a result the proportion who make or exceed nationally expected progress is high and their attainment is rising, both in English and mathematics.
- There was a slight dip in overall attainment in the 2012 Year 6 national tests. This very small year group had started Key Stage 2 with lower standards than usual, and some of the pupils had only been at the school for a short time. Nevertheless, almost all made at least the progress expected nationally in English and mathematics, and those who had been in the school since Year 2 did particularly well. Some of the more-able pupils reached the top levels for their age group in mathematics and writing at Year 6.
- There were not enough pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them, but they make outstanding progress in line with other groups. The funding is spent on additional staff to support individual pupils according to their specific needs, specialised resources and professional advice as needed. In addition, it helps to support additional after-school activities so that pupils have full access to all school activities.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- The majority of teaching is outstanding. Teaching is never less than good. The school has created an environment where pupils love to learn and cannot wait to come to school. Pupils' learning is important to them and they constantly strive to do their best.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high. Pupils try hard to reach their goals. Teachers ask searching questions very effectively to check that pupils understand what they are meant to do, and to help them reach deeper levels of understanding. Pupils are always engrossed in what they are doing. They are quite remarkable in consistently demonstrating very high levels of concentration and sustaining it throughout lessons in all age groups.

- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is of high quality and consistent across all subjects and year groups. Together with progress interviews, marking constantly moves pupils on to reach the next step in their learning, and pupils are always expected to respond to their teacher's comments. Consequently, all pupils make rapid progress, regardless of their starting points or ability levels.
- The school uses new technologies very well. It continually strives to ensure it stays up to date. It uses suites of mobile laptop computers in various lessons and 'electronic pads' for teachers to record assessments during lessons. Teachers are increasingly using a home-school internet system for pupils' work in school, but are not yet consistently making the most of its potential. For example, it could be used to practise solving mathematical problems and real-life investigations started during the day to continue at home in the evening, and to allow pupils to share their enthusiasm for interesting or exciting books with their classmates.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is excellent. Pupils learn in groups according to the level they have reached rather than their age. Highly skilled teaching assistants also play a very important role in teaching phonics and in all areas of school life, including supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and other pupils who need more support.
- Teachers use other areas of the school well to provide a variety of environments for pupils to learn outside their classroom. The all-weather basketball court was seen being used for the start of a mathematics lesson, a large 'teepee' provides another area, and there is an attractive sensory garden. A useful grassed area with picnic tables is available, as well as a playground and field area. Pupils also take part in 'forest school' activities to learn all about the environment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils enjoy coming to school because it is a welcoming place where teachers care about them as individuals and their progress as learners. The school is a harmonious community so pupils feel completely safe.
- All parents who responded to Parent View say that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. They all also say that pupils are kept safe, and staff and the pupils themselves agree. Pupils regulate their own behaviour and do not need to be overseen by adults to make the right choices. The pupils live and learn by a clear set of values they know as the six 'R's.
- 'Trust passes' are provided for every pupil and the system works extremely well. These are so valuable to pupils that they are very careful to make sure they do nothing to have them taken away. Trust passes enable pupils to choose where to take their playtimes and enable them to work independently around school, when appropriate. Separate 'passports' are signed by teachers for pupils who display exemplary attitudes when working towards gaining badges of honour.
- Incidents of bullying are very rare. Pupils understand about different types of bullying and say they know what they should do if ever they have a concern. Pupils of all ages play very well together in the playground, and pupils' outstanding attitude to learning means behaviour in lessons is exemplary.
- Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm, respect and good manners towards each other and adults. They show that they know the basic courtesies of life and say 'please' and 'thank you'. Pupils are

mature and socially advanced due to the exceptional promotion of social and moral attitudes.

- Attendance is above average. There have been no exclusions, permanent or temporary. The 'early-bird' before-school club is run well. It provides a calm and interesting start to the school day, and the behaviour of those who attend is equally exemplary.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The inspirational headteacher leads by example. He is supported by very able governors, who also expect nothing but the best. All leaders are highly effective. Teams of English and mathematics leaders pursue excellence at all levels, regardless of previous performance. All leaders do everything they can at every level to provide the very best education for every pupil. Many innovative learning methods throughout the school support the pursuit of this aim.
- The range of taught subjects is exemplary. It is carefully designed to include spiritual, moral, social, cultural, and safeguarding education, and based on future life skills. Lessons are invariably interesting and enjoyable. Leaders continually review the way things are taught and incorporate any improvements that can be made. Pupils enjoy 'wow' days and special visitors to supplement their learning, including recently 'The Stig' who they all recognised from television.
- All teachers are given demanding targets that are based appropriately on pupils' progress, but cover individual needs as well as whole-school priorities. Teachers report that they feel highly supported by the way this system meets their needs, and leads to highly effective training to develop their skills. All staff have been involved in 'outstanding teacher' or 'outstanding teaching assistant' programmes. The headteacher's work with other schools helps to extend the pool of experience available.
- The school works very well with parents. All who responded to Parent View said they would recommend the school to another parent, and those spoken to by inspectors were effervescent in their support for school. Leaders and governors make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated, and all pupils are fully included in all school activities.
- The local authority regards the school as requiring only 'light-touch' support. It evaluates the school's performance through data analysis and has checked the accuracy of the school's judgements about the quality of teaching. It gives support if requested and has provided a small amount of specialised support for governors at their request.

The governance of the school:

- Governance is exemplary. The governing body is highly effective in challenging and supporting the school's leaders. The governors have a very clear understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement compared with all pupils nationally, and they know what the school is constantly doing to improve its performance. Governors make sure finances are used in a way that supports pupils' learning effectively. For example, they know how the pupil premium is being spent and how well the eligible pupils are doing in response. They use their knowledge to make decisions about staffing and to make sure pay is linked to teachers' performance. Governors know what is done to tackle any underperformance if it should arise. They use their individual strengths extremely well and 'link governors' report back to the governing body, including on health and safety. They ensure that statutory duties are met and the arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current national requirements.

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	120183
Local authority	Rutland
Inspection number	411793

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Evans
Headteacher	Robert Gooding
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2010
Telephone number	01664 474695
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