

William Martin Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School, Harlow

Tawneys Road, Harlow, CM18 6PN

Inspection dates 12–13 June 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 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.

- Pupils achieve well and all ability groups make good progress in a wide range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making excellent progress, especially in mathematics.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school, and this enables pupils of all abilities to learn well. Some is highly effective in promoting outstanding learning.
- Marking across the school is of a very high quality, giving pupils clear steps to help them know what they are doing well and how to improve their work.
- This is a happy school. Both staff and pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average.
- There is a strong family atmosphere and relationships between pupils and staff are excellent, especially in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well, feel very safe and demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely as a team in leading staff to raise the quality of teaching and of pupils' achievement.
- Governors use their individual expertise well to support the school to improve achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in reading and writing, while good, is not as rapid as in mathematics.
- Teachers do not have enough opportunities to observe and learn from the most effective practice within the school or in other schools.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 16 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher.
- They held discussions with the headteacher, other teachers, pupils, three members of the governing body and one representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe, and information about the management of teachers’ performance.
- The views of 12 parents and carers were analysed through their responses on the Parent View website. Inspectors also spoke with parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by the 26 staff who returned a questionnaire.
- All pupils took part in a ‘World Cup Day’ on the second day of the inspection and it was also a ‘non-uniform’ day.
- The inspectors also listened to pupils read in Year 3.

Inspection team

Kelly Stock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized Junior school.
- Most of the pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, of which a rising number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. An above-average and rising proportion are supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A very small number of pupils who have additional needs are taught at the Star Base centre for part of the week.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is slightly higher than the national average. In this school, it applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- The school runs a breakfast club three days a week.
- The headteacher became the headteacher of both the infant and the junior school in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and help pupils to make even faster progress by:
 - challenging all groups to achieve the very highest levels of attainment, particularly in reading and writing
 - sharing the most effective teaching practice in the school and developing closer links with outstanding schools to enable teachers to see highly effective practice in action.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills and abilities below average for their age. All groups make good progress as they pass through the school so that by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' work in their books and lessons, and the school's thorough records confirm that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well.
- Achievement in all subjects is rising. Standards in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics are on track to be above the 2013 national averages at the end of the year.
- The most able pupils achieve well across the school and do particularly well in reading and mathematics in Year 6. They receive high quality support, including Key Stage 3 workshops in mathematics. This year, more of these pupils are reaching the highest levels in their work.
- The school uses the pupil premium to provide a wide range of support ranging from a breakfast club, workshops to improve confidence and resilience, and training for staff to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Funding is spent wisely to make sure all pupils can enjoy the whole life of the school as well as supporting their academic success.
- The previous attainment gap between pupils who receive the pupil premium and others is closing rapidly. These pupils now typically make progress that is similar to, and sometimes better than, that of others in the school.
- Pupils enjoy reading, read widely and the introduction of a reading reward system now means the majority of pupils often read at home. Weaker readers use their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words and all pupils use their skills to work out the meaning and context.
- The school has successfully improved standards in writing. Standards seen in Year 5 show significant improvements in pupils' writing, particularly given their below-average starting points. Staff recognise there is still more to do to match the progress made by pupils in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well due to wide range of additional support provided. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make sure they make the best possible progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good and sometimes even better progress than other pupils. Some are on track to achieve the highest Level 6 in mathematics.
- The school works closely with the local Star Base centre, where a very small number of children with additional needs are taught for part of the week, to make sure they are attending and achieving well.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers show that they have high expectations of themselves and pupils. Relationships are strong and as a result teachers know pupils very well, planning lessons that meet their needs. Where learning is most effective, teachers think carefully about how to support and challenge individual pupils as well as groups of learners.

- Inspectors observed all teachers teach and looked at pupils' literacy, mathematics and topic books and their 'Big Writing' folders. This, alongside the school data, showed all groups of pupils learn well in a wide range of subjects and enjoy their learning.
- Teachers have received a range of training and support from external consultants to improve their teaching. In Year 4, teachers are highly skilled in using questions to encourage pupils to think deeply about their learning. Pupils are also starting to ask curious and more sophisticated questions as a result. In Year 5, teachers have been trained to use drama to develop pupils' writing and in Year 6 the opportunity to work with a Key Stage 3 teacher has led to pupils benefiting from expert subject knowledge in mathematics and making rapid progress.
- Pupils are often inspired and, at times, transfixed, by the experience teachers provide for them. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils used drama based on Harry Potter to include more 'powerful vocabulary' in their writing. In Year 6, pupils filmed a class football match to write a journalist's sport report to help them think carefully about the order of events and how to use language for effect.
- Any pupils at risk of falling behind in their work receive excellent support. However, in some lessons, particularly when reading and writing, pupils who do not have additional needs are not given the same level of support and when activities are less challenging, some pupils say work is 'not that difficult'.
- Marking has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now of a high quality across the school. Outstanding marking was seen in one Year 5 and one Year 6 class where pupils received detailed comments to identify what they are doing well and how to improve their work. This enables pupils to make rapid progress, particularly in their writing.
- Teaching assistants are well directed and highly skilled in enabling pupils who have additional needs to make good progress. This reflects the investment by the school in the training provided for them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They care for each other and show sensitivity for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. They are very keen to learn, interested in their work and show great pride in their school.
- In all classes, behaviour is exemplary and class ambassadors warmly welcome visitors. Teachers work hard to develop pupils' skills so that they are resilient and persevere when they find work difficult. As a result, pupils are able to work well on their own and in groups. They are confident to ask thoughtful and curious questions and talk to each other sensibly and insightfully about their work.
- Pupils listen carefully to each other and their teachers. They settle quickly and no learning time is lost even when activities excite them. Their attitudes remain positive regardless of the activity, teacher or whole-school event.
- The small number of pupils with challenging needs are supported extremely well, especially in Year 3 where teachers are highly skilled in managing a wide range of needs. The full-time learning mentor works closely with leaders, staff and a wide range of outside agencies to make sure these vulnerable pupils receive every opportunity to meet their often quite complex emotional, physical and learning needs. This level of care and genuine concern enables all

groups of children to make progress emotionally and academically. As a result they behave very well and are confident to speak to visitors, and contribute fully in lessons.

- Behaviour around the school is equally excellent. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 especially speak articulately and sensitively about how all pupils should be accepted and valued as they are regardless of their race, disability or sexual orientation.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils know all about how to keep safe online and say they feel really safe in school. They say 'Teachers give up a lot of their time for us,' and, 'You always see a smile on children's faces.'
- Pupils say bullying is rare, understand the different forms it can take, but say that if it does happen teachers deal with it quickly.

The leadership and management are good

- The combination of the long-serving deputy headteacher's passion and quiet determination and the headteacher's strategic experience ensures there is a strong vision for the school's ongoing improvement.
- Careful planning enables the successful running and drive for improvement in the junior school, enabling the headteacher to also share her time with the infant school.
- Staff responsible for subjects also work effectively to secure the very best for pupils to meet their emotional needs as well as maintaining above-average standards. There have been numerous changes to the curriculum and new schemes successfully introduced to support pupils' reading and writing.
- The staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the headteacher and leadership team, and share their commitment to improvement. The appointment of teachers since the headteacher's arrival in 2010 has resulted in an impressive mix of talent in relatively new and experienced teachers.
- Parents say teachers 'go the extra mile' to help pupils and would recommend the school. The 'Achievement for All' project has been successful in engaging parents in their children's learning.
- In the last inspection, the wide variety of topics and clubs was highlighted as a strength. Further changes have been introduced to make it even better, to include a range of trips and special days such as Roman, Bollywood and Divali days.
- Teachers plan creatively to give pupils memorable learning experiences, particularly to engage boys in writing. Trips or visitors are organised for each new topic to spark pupils' interest and imagination. Topics now include Wallace and Gromit, Dragons and Harry Potter.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. An exceptional example of this was observed in one Year 5 philosophy lesson where pupils discussed the question, 'Would you rather be determined or gracious?' linked to the themed World Cup day. Pupils, including those with challenging special educational needs, spoke eloquently about the importance of fairness in sportsmanship. One said, 'It doesn't matter if you win or lose, it is how you treat others.'
- The primary school sport funding is being used exceptionally well to boost pupils' physical well-

being. Pupils now have access to specialist coaches in lessons and an extensive range of clubs from cheerleading and ballet to circuits and athletics. The school has recently been awarded the Sainsbury's School Games National Bronze award.

- The school has links with a local secondary school, the Harlow Education Consortium, and an outer London primary school to share best practice. However, teachers currently do not have the opportunity to observe each other, or highly effective teachers in other schools.
- The local authority has provided 'light touch' support. Recent visits in the spring term have been useful in helping leaders to identify areas for improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have experienced a period of change since the federation of the junior and infant school. They have looked carefully at their individual backgrounds and expertise and identified gaps so that they receive appropriate training, for example in understanding how best to use performance data.
 - They set appropriate targets for the headteacher and make sure the links between teacher pay and performance are fair.
 - Governors are kept up to date with regular newsletters and meetings so that they know how well the pupils are performing and how teaching is improving. Consequently, they have a good understanding of how effectively the school's money is spent, in particular the pupil premium and sports funding, and the impact it is having on raising standards.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 115100 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 444164 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 240 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Emma Forde |
| Headteacher | Janet Matthews |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 February 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01279 424120 |
| Fax number | 01279 421595 |
| Email address | head@williammartin-jun.essex.sch.uk |

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