

Wellsprings Primary School

Crowcombe Road, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 7NF



10–11 July 2019

Inspection dates

| | |
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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have taken effective action to address weaknesses found at the previous inspection. Consequently, most pupils catch up and are prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The headteacher has developed an effective leadership team. Leaders are ambitious for pupils to be successful, including in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Staff morale is high. Leaders support staff to feel empowered and to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively.
- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are firm in hold leaders to account for their actions.
- Teachers know pupils well and use assessment information to plan work that meets pupils' needs, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- The leadership of early reading and phonics is particularly strong. Teaching effectively supports pupils, including those with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, to catch up well.
- The quality of writing has improved well. However, pupils' writing is not at the same standard in different subjects. There are some remaining weaknesses in spelling, particularly in key stage 2.
- The pastoral care for pupils with complex social, emotional and behavioural needs is effective. Staff work patiently and diligently to help pupils get the support they need to attend school and achieve in their education.
- The early years, including Nursery, is well led and managed. Most children catch up well, particularly in their development of language and communication skills to be prepared for the challenges of Year 1.
- At times, the curriculum and teaching restrict pupils in being able to consistently use the full range of their skills and knowledge in a variety of subjects, particularly science.
- A minority of parents do not have confidence in the school's behaviour management systems. For a very few, this mars their relationships with, and confidence in, senior leaders.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. However, staff's expectations of pupils when they are moving around the school are not consistent. This leads to some occasions when pupils come to lessons not as prepared to learn as might reasonably be expected of them.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by:
 - implementing consistent routines and expectations of pupils when moving around the school and between different parts of the school day
 - strengthening relationships and communication with all parents, particularly to ensure a shared understanding of the school's approach for behaviour management.

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment further by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' writing in other subjects across the curriculum, including spelling in key stage 2
 - re-evaluating the curriculum for pupils to deepen their knowledge and breadth of skills, (such as research, analysis and observation) consistently in other subjects, particularly science.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and governors have worked diligently to address weaknesses found during the previous inspection. Consequently, pupils' achievement is continuing to improve in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils are catching up well to be prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The headteacher has shown resilience to improve the school. He has taken difficult decisions with the pupils' best interests at heart. These ensure that outcomes for pupils are continuing to improve well.
- The headteacher and governors have developed an effective leadership team. Leaders share an ambition and moral imperative to see pupils achieve. Consequently, pupils are succeeding personally, socially and emotionally as well as academically.
- Leaders invest strongly in staff and their continuing professional development (CPD). Staff morale is high. Staff feel valued and empowered to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively. For example, newly qualified teachers settle quickly into the start of their careers and more experienced teachers gain nationally accredited awards to hone their skills and expertise as leaders.
- Leaders undertake effective monitoring and evaluation activities. This enables them to have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders use this information for identifying the right priorities for improvement through the Raising Achievement Plan (RAP).
- Leaders have introduced effective systems and activities to hold teachers to account for their pupils' achievements. For example, teachers and leaders use rigorous ongoing assessment information when they meet to discuss pupils' progress and to identify pupils who are at risk of underachieving. These discussions, which include the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), provide valuable opportunities to identify pupils and ensure swift intervention.
- The inclusion team (comprising the headteacher, SENCo, early years SENCo, parent family support adviser (PFSA) and emotional literacy support advisers (ELSAs)), work effectively together to form a strong pastoral network of support for vulnerable pupils. This helps pupils to feel valued in gaining the self-esteem and confidence to catch up at school.
- Leaders ensure that the additional funding for pupils with SEND and pupil premium is spent efficiently. They use the funding wisely to provide additional provision and support, including timely interventions for pupils' reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, targeted pupils, including those with an education,

health and care plan (EHC plan) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL) are supported effectively to make good progress.

- The reading and early years leaders provide inspirational and high-quality leadership for early reading development and phonics. They have an intricate knowledge of phonics and passion for reading which is reflected through their leadership in lessons.
- As a result, pupils succeed in meeting critical national benchmarks and develop confidence as well as enjoyment in reading.
- Leaders provide a range of rich experiences for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These foster a keen understanding in pupils about citizenship and British values. For example, in Year 5, pupils recruited as 'mini-police' officers by the Avon and Somerset police contribute significantly through voluntary community work, including visiting a local residential home senior citizens.
- The curriculum model ensures that pupils engage in the breadth of national curriculum subjects. However, it is not yet designed well enough for pupils to enjoy the same depth and quality of learning consistently in different subjects, such as design and technology. This limits the quality of learning and experiences for pupils in some subjects.
- Furthermore, teachers do not consistently make the same high expectations of pupils in different subjects. This reduces the quality of work and lowers the standards that pupils are reasonably capable of reaching in some subjects, for example science and design and technology.
- The majority of pupils and parents are very happy with the school. They recognise the improvements made over time. A typical view of parents includes: 'Wellsprings is an excellent school that puts everything into giving the children the best schooling experience they can.'
- A minority of parents lacks confidence in the way leaders implement the behaviour management policy. However, leaders take timely and proportionate action in dealing with behavioural incidents, including rare occasions of bullying. For example, leaders use the National Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and police successfully to intervene in individual cases as part of the school's anti-bullying measures.
- Leaders and governors have worked successfully with the local authority to improve the school. Well-directed training, for example, mathematics support through the Taunton Teaching Alliance and core visits with advisers, have aided the improvement process. This partnership is set to continue.

Governance of the school

- Governors have rigorous systems to check the school's progress. They use a range of checks and balances to monitor the school and find the information they need to take strategic decisions.
- Governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses thoroughly. They undertake a range of visits to school in order to gather information. In addition, they invite leaders and children (via the Children's Parliament) to give presentations at governors' meetings. These enable governors to ask questions and evaluate progress against key parts of the school's RAP.
- Governors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. For example, they have a good knowledge of how the school's pupil premium funding is being allocated. This enables them to be stringent in holding leaders to account for pupils' achievements.
- Governors have good relationships with staff. They have established a healthy balance between effective challenge and support in securing the necessary improvements.
- Governors have responded positively to the external review of governance and previous advice given to them. They now run their own affairs in an orderly and proficient manner. The chair of the governing board provides effective guidance with clear expectations so that the full governing body runs smoothly in discharging its duties and responsibilities, including safeguarding pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that staff recruitment, vetting and training reflect current legislation and government requirements. This ensures that staff are fully aware of their responsibilities towards safeguarding pupils.
- Leaders and staff promote a strong culture for safeguarding pupils. For example, the designated safeguarding leads refer or escalate concerns speedily to the relevant authorities. Staff work effectively with external agencies, including the police and social care in keeping pupils safe. They monitor pupils closely to protect them in a range of situations.
- Leaders' checks on attendance have also led to successful action for pupils missing education. Leaders' tenacity has ensured pupils are kept safe within the education sector when pupils move or change schools.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils say that they feel safe. They have confidence in school staff to look after them. Pupils are knowledgeable about a range of issues, from knowing how to stay safe online to understanding obesity, and mental health issues.

- The school runs successful physical activity programmes and PE (physical education) to promote awareness of physical well-being and welfare for pupils. This is part of the school's approach to wider and holistic well-being and support for pupils, and in adopting healthy life-styles.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and staff have a good knowledge of the pupils and their needs. Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work that meets pupils' different needs, including the most able pupils. Consequently, pupils catch up well towards national benchmarks and expectations to be ready for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge for teaching reading and phonics. This is rightly regarded as a priority. Phonics sessions are planned carefully so that pupils get off to a good start in the early years, or otherwise catch up well. This includes those with SEND and/or disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers ensure that pupils with distinct needs, including those with SEND (including those with an EHC plan), EAL and/or pupil premium are identified and targeted appropriately. Teachers use external advice, including from occupational therapists and speech and language consultants, to help construct plans with meaningful targets for vulnerable pupils. The focused activities enable pupils to make progress, often from very low starting points.
- Teachers ensure that effective modelling and a range of resources support pupils' understanding in lessons. For example, pupils use apparatus in lessons to secure their understanding of number and place value. These are particularly effective in the early years and key stage 1 where pupils routinely use practical aids and resources to deepen their understanding.
- Teaching strategies to improve writing are proving to be successful. Pupils are now writing with increased fluency, creativity and flair. However, teachers' expectations are not consistent in the quality of pupils' writing in other subjects across the curriculum. This includes pupils repeating errors in spellings that are not addressed quickly, particularly in some key stage 2 classes. This lowers the quality of pupils' writing in different subjects and, therefore, holds some back when this occurs.
- Similarly, teachers do not ensure that lessons consistently enable pupils to use and apply the full range of their skills and knowledge in different subjects, such as science. This sometimes limits pupils' ability in using and applying skills for research, analysis and evaluation to the highest standards.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff are well trained to work with pupils who have complex social, emotional and behavioural needs. For example, the PFSA and ELSAs work closely with the leadership and SEND teams to ensure they meet each pupil's individual needs. This helps pupils to settle and be in a position to access learning in lessons.
- Pupils have a well-rounded understanding of their health and well-being. For example, the school parliament has undertaken work to improve pupils' mental health or other issues, such as obesity. Pupils understand the seriousness of these matters as they are encouraged to discuss these directly with governors.
- Pupils feel valued and respected. They enjoy taking a lead in running the school through different roles and responsibilities. For example, those on the school council or house captains ensure that pupils are heard and have a meaningful stake in the school's strategic direction.
- Staff introduce high-quality activities for pupils to take responsibility in their day-to-day lives and for future success as citizens. For example, Year 5 'mini-police' officers are required to undertake a full selection process before being appointed in their roles by the Police. This ensures pupils are gaining the necessary skills to be successful for the next stage in their education.
- Some inconsistent expectations of the pupils mean that there are some occasions when the quality of pupils' work is not as good as it can be, or that pupils lack pride in the presentation of their work (including handwriting). This reduces the quality of work seen in books and, sometimes, the standards that a few pupils reach.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Leaders take effective action to improve pupils' behaviour. For example, leaders record and evaluate incidents, including those that occur at breaktimes, to take appropriate action in addressing issues that arise. Consequently, the number of exclusions has fallen significantly and is continuing to decline.
- Leaders also take effective action to improve pupils' attendance. As a result, this is now similar to the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of those with persistently high absence has fallen and is now better than the national average. This is having a direct impact on raising pupils' achievement.

- Pupils enjoy being reading ambassadors and learning from visiting authors. This has helped many to improve their reading skills and also to promote an interest in books and literature across the school.
- Staff's expectations of pupils moving around the school or during transition points, such as re-entering for lessons after breaktimes are inconsistent. This leads to some occasions when pupils are not punctual or as prepared to learn as might be reasonably expected of them. When this occurs, it interferes with some pupils' learning or enjoyment of lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make strong progress from their entry points, whether these are from the early years onwards or from different stages as they join the school from other schools. As a result, most pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, including for disadvantaged pupils is improving well. Most pupils are now meeting or working well towards national expectations and benchmarks at all key stages in the school. The upward trend at the end of both key stages is being sustained.
- The most able pupils are stretched and challenged effectively. This is increasing the proportion of pupils attaining the greater depth standard in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stage 1 and 2. However, there is more to do to ensure that the most able disadvantaged pupils consistently meet the highest standards.
- Targeted pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable to under-achievement make strong progress. In particular, those with SEND (including pupils with an EHC plan), children looked after, or those with EAL now make secure progress in terms of their academic as well as social, emotional and behavioural development.
- Pupils who join that school at different points or mid-year make good progress. Leaders and teachers quickly assess pupils on entry and take the right steps to help them catch up where this is necessary. Pupils settle well to make good progress, including those with complex needs and/or SEND.
- There is a strong culture of reading and in getting pupils to acquire their relevant phonic knowledge quickly, particularly in the early years and key stage 1. This means that most pupils meet national benchmarks, including the Year 1 phonics screening check. Furthermore, those who do not meet this standard are taught well to be able to catch up quickly, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND.

- However, the quality of writing across the curriculum is inconsistent. There are times when pupils do not produce the same standard of writing, particularly spelling in key stage 2, which holds some pupils back.
- Some weaknesses in the curriculum model or in teachers' planning limits the consistency of pupils' skills and knowledge across the curriculum. For example, pupils' research, analysis and evaluation skills in subjects such as design and technology or science are not strongly reinforced so that pupils reach the highest standards in these subjects.
- Pupils' handwriting skills are not developed well enough or consistently across the school. At times, this reduces the quality of pupils' writing and the fluency to write legibly and neatly for different purposes.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders and managers, in particular the co-leaders of the early years team, are effective. Their knowledge, passion and commitment are admirable and used well so that children in the early years get off to a 'flying start'.
- Teachers ensure that the early years environment is well organised and managed to provide an enticing, enriching and vibrant provision for the children. As such, children benefit from, and access, the full range of the early years curriculum through wellplanned activities.
- Staff model positive behaviours and interact well with children. This includes engaging children in activities to rapidly improve their communication, language and communication skills. Children, including disadvantaged children, make good progress, often from low starting points, to be ready for Year 1.
- Teachers use their knowledge of the different stages of children's development to improve independent reading and writing skills. For example, an inspector observed Nursery-aged girls handling a book and taking turns to talk about it on their own. The children spoke enthusiastically and shared their ideas freely to reflect an enjoyment of books.
- Teachers in the early years introduce and rigorously follow the school's preferred phonics strategy. This includes daily phonics sessions and ongoing assessment of letters and sounds from the Nursery onwards. As a result, children quickly acquire the necessary phonic skills for reading and writing so that differences, including for disadvantaged children and those with SEND, begin to close.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use accurate assessment information to plan the next steps for children. Parents are also included, and some contribute through the school's preferred online assessment and reporting system.

- Parents strongly endorse the work of the early years team. They are effusive in their praise of staff. Parents feel informed and involved to establish positive and open relationships with staff.
- Transition and induction into the Nursery and Reception Years are also well managed. These are bespoke to a child's situation. For example, staff individualise arrangements for home and/or other pre-school visits or adjust 'stay and play' sessions to meet the needs of each child. This helps children and families settle into the life and expectations of the school.
- Leaders' are not complacent. Their self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders have identified the right next steps to keep raising achievement in the early years. As yet, despite the positive gains, there is still more to do increase the proportions of the most able children exceeding the early learning goals.
- Safeguarding arrangements are effective. These are maintained in line with the wider school's processes, policies and expectations. Staff also meet the requirements relating specifically to the early years, such as paediatric first-aid training and supervision.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 123710 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10088302 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| | 339 |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | The governing body |
| | Shirley Chapman |
| Appropriate authority | Mark Lunn |
| Chair | 01823275556 |
| Headteacher | https://slp5.somerset.org.uk/webs/wellsprings/SitePages/Home.aspx |
| Telephone number | office@wellsprings.somerset.sch.uk |
| Website | 15–16 March 2017 |
| Email address | |
| Date of previous inspection | |

Information about this school

- Wellsprings is a co-educational school set within the Taunton town district.
- Wellsprings Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school. It has mixed classes in the key stage 2.
- The school has a governor-run Nursery on-site. This caters for three- and four-year-old children.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and disadvantaged funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is also above the national average. However, the proportion of pupils with an EHC plan is lower than the national average.
- The number of pupils who join the school other than at the usual starting points is higher than the national average. ✓ Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in all classes across the school, sometimes accompanied by the headteacher or leaders.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, SENCo, assistant headteacher(s) and other subject/team leaders.
- Additional discussions were held with the local authority adviser and the school's effectiveness partner.
- The inspectors gained the views of pupils throughout the inspection, including discussions at breaktimes.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work in books to establish the current quality of work and standards of current pupils in books.
- An inspector listened to pupils read in Years 1 and 2. They also scrutinised pupils' daily reading records and assessments of others across the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and parents to seek their views of the school. The 37 responses from Parent View and corresponding free-texts comments were considered by inspectors. In addition, inspectors considered information from surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including governor visits and minutes, improvement plans (RAP) and information relating to behaviour, safety and safeguarding. An inspector also scrutinised documents and records relating to pupils' behaviour and exclusions.
- An inspector met with representatives of the governing body.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Richard Steward

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Cogher

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-andalternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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