

# Flash Ley Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124205
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380833
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Susan Walsh

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	300
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pat Stimpson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gareth Morris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Hawksmoor Road Stafford ST17 9DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 356642
<b>Fax number</b>	01785 356651
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@flashley.staffs.sch.uk

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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	35
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	9 November 2011

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380833



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Walsh	Additional Inspector
Mary Hughes	Additional inspector
Alan Jones	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 25 lessons led by 13 of the school's teachers. Meetings were held with staff as well as with members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including the work of the Voyage childcare provision and the unit for pupils with speech or communication difficulties. They also looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress and arrangements for safeguarding as well as other documents. They scrutinised 187 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and questionnaires from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

The school is slightly larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals is above average. The school has a specific unit for pupils in Key Stage 1 with speech or communication difficulties. The unit is managed by the school, although the local authority decides upon the allocation of places. The proportion of pupils supported at School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational need is above average. More pupils join the school at different points in the school year than is usual. The school provides extended child care as part of the 'Voyage' provision, as well as morning and afternoon Nursery provision. It includes a before- and after-school club, day care and provision for children who have not yet reached their third birthday. The school has a range of external accreditations and awards including the International School's Foundation Award and Dyslexia Friendly Status.

In each of the last three years the school has exceeded the government floor standards. That is, more than 60% of pupils have reached the expected level by the end of Year 6 and more pupils have made the expected progress between Year 2 and Year 6 than the national average.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school which has improved considerably in recent years. Pupils achieve well. Although their starting points are often low, pupils' attainment is usually average by the end of Year 6 because they have made good progress. Pupils make better progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils who attend the unit make outstanding progress in their communication skills.
- Teaching is usually good and there are examples of outstanding teaching. There is an increasing number of lively and engaging lessons. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long, causing learning to slow. A minority of staff in Key Stage 1 have underdeveloped skills regarding the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and reading. Teachers' marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their writing.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, both in lessons and around school. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and bullying is rare. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with the way their children gain confidence. The on site childcare is good at promoting children's personal development and their speaking and listening skills, thus ensuring that they are well prepared for school.
- The ambitious leadership and drive of the headteacher and senior leaders have created the conditions for learning that have allowed pupils to thrive. That includes establishing a good curriculum. An increasing number of staff are involved in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. There are variations in the rigour of that work. The extensive data about the progress of individual pupils are not always used effectively to gain an overview of progress over time. The governing body is increasingly involved in the work of the school, but its understanding of school data has not been fully developed. That has a negative effect on its ability to provide the school with challenge.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to write at length
  - ensuring that marking indicates clearly how pupils can improve their work.
- Eliminate the small amount of satisfactory teaching by:
  - enhancing teachers' skills in teaching phonics and reading where needed
  - making certain that teachers do not talk for too long at the beginning of each lesson and that they give pupils enough time to work independently.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - developing further the skills of middle leaders in order to address remaining inconsistencies in the quality of their work
  - using data more effectively to provide an overview of pupils' progress over time
  - improving the governing body's ability to analyse data.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Parents are correct when they say that their children are making good progress in lessons. In establishing good-quality child care and combining this with good-quality Nursery Provision, the school has been able to improve children's skills at a very early stage in their education. That is because staff in the Nursery and the 'Voyage' provision focus well on improving children's speaking and listening and social skills. They are consistently modelling speech and good behaviour in lessons. The school is successfully closing the gap for those with the most poorly developed skills and children's skills when they enter Year 1 are now close to the national expectations.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has risen significantly. Overall attainment is now just above average at the end of Year 2 and attainment is average in reading. That is because often pupils make outstanding progress in lessons in Year 2, but their progress in lessons in Year 1 is more pedestrian, particularly in reading. Although attainment is broadly average by the time pupils leave Year 6, it is higher in reading and mathematics than in writing. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are especially skilled at teaching pupils more advanced reading skills. They ask pupils challenging questions and increase their ability to extract information from text and to look beyond the literal meaning. Pupils are far more enthusiastic about mathematics lessons than writing lessons because they find them more enjoyable and challenging. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities in lessons to practise their writing skills and develop their creativity by producing longer pieces of work.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. That is

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because the work set is usually matched carefully to their needs. Teaching assistants are proficient at re-shaping teacher's explanations and ensuring that pupils understand fully the concepts that are being taught. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals are catching up with their peers because they are supported well. Pupils who are taught within the unit for pupils with speech or communication difficulties make exceptional progress in developing their ability to speak because of the relentless focus on how letter sounds are formed and extensive opportunities for pupils to practise their speech. For example, in a lesson about 'bossy words', children pretended to be a satellite navigation system. They were able to record their voices as they moved around school and both correct speech and the use of instructional language were reinforced.

### **Quality of teaching**

As a result of mainly good teaching and some outstanding teaching, pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well over time. Many parents and carers, correctly, say that teaching is good and comment positively on the exciting activities that are available in school. The teaching of communication skills is outstanding in the unit for pupils with speech or communication difficulties. Elsewhere in the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teaching of communication, reading and writing and mathematical skills is usually good. In Key Stage 1, there are wide variations in teachers' knowledge and understanding of the teaching of reading and the connection between letters and sounds. As a result, a small number of pupils in Year 1 still find it difficult to read very simple texts because they are unable to recognise letter sounds reliably and blend these sounds together. Many opportunities are taken to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in a Year 5 guided reading session, pupils were able to express strong moral views about the way characters in *Oliver Twist* behaved and were most disapproving of the activities of Bill Sykes and Fagin.

Where teaching is outstanding, activities are both demanding and fun. For example, in a Year 2 lesson about the use of verbs, teachers and teaching assistants worked extremely well as a team and all had very high expectations. Questioning was used exceptionally well by all staff, both to check and extend learning. The excellent opportunities for pupils to work together that were seen in that lesson are a strong feature of lessons throughout the school. In the small number of satisfactory lessons seen, teachers talked for too long during introductions and this slowed learning. Pupils lost concentration when they had to listen for a protracted time with few demands being made of them. Marking is sometimes congratulatory. While the positive comments and grades boost confidence, pupils are getting limited guidance about how to improve their work, especially their writing. Although pupils are set academic targets, these are rarely referred to in lessons or in marking.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The staff have created an ethos, which promotes positive attitudes to learning and an environment that allows pupils to feel safe. High expectations of standards of

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behaviour in and out of the classroom result in constantly good behaviour. There are high levels of cooperation and pupils are very good at supporting each other's learning. Pupils have positive attitudes in lessons and are keen to get on with their work.

Pupils treat each other with respect. Parents, carers and pupils report little bullying. Any incidents that are reported appear to be fairly isolated. Although there are occasional fallings out, pupils say that these are quickly resolved by staff. They are keen to point out that pupils from all backgrounds get on well together, saying 'Everyone here is accepted for who they are'. Parents and carers of pupils who join the school late say that their children settle in very quickly in the friendly and supportive atmosphere. Pupils respond well to the wide range of opportunities to take on extra responsibilities. For example, Year 5 pupils enjoy helping younger pupils with playground games and managing playground equipment. The school provides pupils with appropriate guidance about staying safe, including when using computers. Most pupils attend school regularly. Levels of attendance are rising and persistent absent decreasing because staff are dogged in their determination to establish reasons for absence and to promote good attendance and punctuality.

### **Leadership and management**

Accelerated progress and rising levels of attainment, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at the end of Key Stage 1, reflect the high expectations of key leaders, including the governing body, and illustrate the school's good capacity to improve. There is a coherent programme of monitoring and evaluation that is linked securely to development planning. It involves a wide range of industrious staff, who take their management responsibilities very seriously. There are, however, some variations in the rigour of their work. For example, occasionally, the school's view of teaching is overly positive because there has been insufficient focus on the progress pupils make in lessons. Nevertheless, teaching has improved because of the appointment of new enthusiastic staff and the further development of the skills of more-established staff through regular staff training. The school has extensive information about the progress made by individual pupils. It is used well to ensure that any pupil who is danger of falling behind is identified quickly and offered timely support. It is used less efficiently to measure the progress made by different classes and year groups over time. The governing body has improved its skills, but it knows that there is more to do to develop its understanding of data in order that it can hold the school rigorously to account.

The broad and balanced curriculum meets pupils' needs and is good at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils confirm that recent developments to the curriculum, including making more links between subjects, have made lessons interesting and enjoyable. They talk enthusiastically about their geography lessons, where map making skills, geographical knowledge and mathematical skills have been combined. The school is particularly proud of the focus on outdoor education, which has been used successfully to expand pupils' range of experiences and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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Additionally, visits are used particularly well in the Nursery and Voyage provision to ensure that children have plenty of exciting things to talk about. Leaders and managers promote equality actively. Close links have been made with the local community and links with the international community are developing. The school has been less successful in developing its work with the wider community in the United Kingdom. Consequently, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures is limited. Nevertheless they frown upon racism and are very interested in other ways of life. There is a strong focus on ensuring that every child reaches its full potential, irrespective of background. Therefore, gaps between outcomes for different groups of pupils are narrowing. Thorough training has ensured that the governing body and school staff have a heightened awareness of safeguarding procedures. Consequently, staff are vigilant in their efforts to keep children safe.



## The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

The outstanding and very supportive relationships between children and staff result in happy, well-settled and confident children. Systems to ensure children are safe and secure are robust. Children are engaged actively in a wide variety of interesting activities and the outdoors is used particularly well to promote learning. Skilled staff are good at modelling and promoting language development. Consequently, children make especially good progress in their speaking and listening while they are in the setting. Behaviour is consistently good and children play well together. The children are also encouraged to develop independence and the skills that are needed to learn successfully, including sustaining concentration and developing perseverance. Although children’s progress is assessed regularly, this information is not always used to plan specific activities that would boost the progress of individual children further. There is a clear focus on enhancing provision continually and the team reacted quickly to comments in the recent childcare report and has already enhanced children’s opportunities to access resources freely that help develop their creativity.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	2

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Flash Ley Primary School, Stafford, ST17 9DR**

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. All of the team enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. We were very impressed by your good manners and the thoughtful way you treat each other. It was good to see you helping each other in lessons. It was clear that you learn a lot about other subjects, such as geography, as well practising your skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

Your standards of attainment are average. Although you make good progress, the progress of older children is better in reading and mathematics than in writing. We have asked your teachers to make sure you have plenty of opportunities to produce big pieces of writing and to provide you with more advice about how to improve your writing when they mark your work. You told us that teaching is good in most lessons and we agree. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long at the introduction of lessons and this affects your learning. Also, some teachers in Key Stage 1 are not as skilled at teaching reading as others, so we have asked staff to improve these aspects of their teaching.

The leaders and managers at your school are doing a good job. We have asked the school leaders to make sure they have enough information about the progress you make in each school year and to make certain that they are always equally rigorous in the way they check the school's work. We have also asked the governing body to develop their understanding of school data further, so that they can oversee the school's work more effectively. You can help your school to improve further by continuing to try very hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh  
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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