

Alexandra Junior School

Meir Road, Normacot, Stoke on Trent, ST3 7JG

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement has improved rapidly to good since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils apply their basic skills well when learning in other subjects.
- Good teaching promotes good learning in a wide range of subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported, which results in them making good progress.
- All pupils supported by the pupil premium make at least the same progress as other pupils in the school and nationally.
- Attendance has improved well and is above average.
- Behaviour is good and all pupils are polite and caring, and they are enthusiastic learners.
- Senior leaders and governors have robustly secured improvement in teaching and achievement.
- Leaders and managers rigorously hold teachers to account for the progress made by pupils in their classes.
- Comprehensive analysis of pupils' progress enables senior leaders to provide additional support for those pupils who may be falling slightly behind in their learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils are capable of making even more progress in mathematics and English if their specific needs are fully addressed.
- There remain a small number of minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 21 lessons across a broad range of subjects. Senior leaders and inspectors jointly observed four lessons. The inspectors held discussions with pupils and staff, they met with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. In addition, inspectors scrutinised the work of pupils in classrooms and around school.
- Inspectors took account of four responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), 10 staff questionnaires and parental surveys carried out by the school.
- A range of documents were looked at, including those relating to safeguarding, the school development priorities, the school's self-evaluation, records related to monitoring plus behaviour and attendance and the school's data on pupils' progress.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jean Tarry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized school serving Key Stage 2 pupils.
- Most pupils come from minority ethnic groups, they are predominantly of Pakistani heritage; the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average and increasing.
- The percentage of pupils for whom English is an additional language is well above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maximise the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress in English and mathematics by:
 - more rapidly identifying and planning to meet pupils' precise needs on joining the school
 - ensuring all leaders and managers have a more precise focus on pupils' progress in lessons
 - using all teaching assistants effectively to promote more rapid progress in learning.
- Eliminate the few remaining minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by:
 - more precisely matching learning tasks to the needs of all pupils
 - ensuring no learning time is wasted in lessons
 - sharing the existing good and outstanding practice with all teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From starting points which are generally below average, particularly in writing, pupils make good progress. At the end of Year 6 virtually all pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age and some are exceeding them in mathematics.
- Robust data are held by the school showing strong progress made by pupils in all year groups. In 2012, all pupils made the progress expected of them and many exceeded it in English. The overwhelming majority made expected progress in mathematics while many exceeded it.
- Gaps in attainment between pupils in school and pupils nationally have narrowed considerably since the previous inspection, particularly in writing. In lessons pupils are challenged to write for enjoyment; this has contributed successfully to the rapid improvement.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium benefit from very precise support provided by the school resulting in their making at least similar rates of progress to other pupils in the school and all pupils nationally. Some pupils do not always benefit from precise identification of their specific needs when starting school and therefore do not make the exceptional progress of which they are capable.
- Those pupils from minority ethnic groups, for whom English is an additional language, are well supported in this caring and nurturing environment thus enabling them to excel in their learning. Good liaison between home and school is an important factor in their academic success.
- Due to good teaching and effective well-matched support, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good rates of progress which are similar to, and in some cases exceeding, that of all pupils nationally. Data are used robustly to track the progress made by, and inform any future support required to maximise academic success for, these pupils.
- The school has rightly focused on improving the reading and writing skills of pupils. This has enabled pupils to increase their confidence in using these skills in other curriculum areas. Pupils are now able to use their literacy skills to good effect in a wide range of subjects enabling them to extend their knowledge successfully.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers skilfully enable pupils to use their well-developed literacy and communication skills to access other subjects successfully. In one lesson pupils described excitedly how they had enjoyed improving their construction of complex sentences because the teacher had carefully linked the activity to their study of the Ancient Greeks in history. In this particular lesson pupils made outstanding progress because of the exceptionally effective teaching which was very well matched to their needs.
- In lessons and around school good relationships exist between pupils and teachers which contribute successfully to pupils' enjoyment of learning. When teachers challenge pupils well, as in the overwhelmingly majority of lessons, learning progresses at a fast pace.
- Questioning is used effectively in lessons to challenge pupils and probe their understanding. Pupils answer questions with enthusiasm; they are keen to demonstrate to their teachers how well they are progressing in their learning.
- The most effective learning takes place in lessons where teachers continually adapt their teaching to successfully increase the level of challenge for pupils when they are making rapid gains in learning.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and use their good subject

knowledge to extend learning for specific groups of pupils, such as those who are more able.

- Learning tasks are well matched to pupils' interest and levels of ability. Occasionally teachers, particularly in the youngest year group, do not match the task as carefully to pupils' specific learning needs thus reducing their potential progress slightly.
- Most teachers plan for teaching assistants to engage well with pupils throughout lessons. On a few occasions some teaching assistants do not securely drive learning as effectively as possible.
- Pupils have specific targets for improvement and explain clearly what they must do in order to progress to the higher levels.
- In a very small minority of lessons the pace of learning slows slightly when teachers take too long to get pupils fully engaged in independent learning tasks and during transition between learning activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning make a positive contribution to good learning in lessons. Pupils behave very well in classrooms and on the playground. They respond well when teachers ask them to undertake specific tasks or duties and they have many responsibilities in school.
- Peer mediation clinics are run by a group of dedicated and skilful pupil counsellors from a base room which is easily accessible for all pupils. When necessary, the mediators skilfully enable their peers to recognise the errors of their ways and how their actions may have upset or hurt others. This approach very successfully helps to minimise instances where behaviour is anything less than good.
- Eco angels make a positive contribution to the life of the school. They have specific responsibilities for raising awareness of how pupils and staff can undertake simple tasks to reduce carbon emissions. Recently, the work of the school has been recognised nationally for being exceptionally successful in being 'eco friendly'.
- There is a tangible welcoming and caring school ethos where the opinions and views of all are considered respectfully. Groups of pupils such as the eco angels and peer mediators rightly say they make a difference to the running of the school.
- Pupils recognise the differences between bullying and generally falling out. They report that instances of bullying are extremely rare and, if they do arise, once reported to an adult in school they are resolved rapidly. There is a good awareness of what pupils should do to keep themselves safe in the world outside of school.
- Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy coming to school. The home/school liaison partnerships are strong and support pupils' attendance well. Pupils are rightly proud of their regular attendance and have responded well to schemes introduced by school to ensure they attend regularly.
- Pupils are very aware of their rights and how they expect to be treated but equally of their responsibilities for the treatment of others. These rights and responsibilities enable pupils to develop a strong understanding of what is right and wrong and to respect others in the rich and diverse cultural environment of school.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully accelerated pupils' progress since the last inspection, especially in writing. The quality of teaching has been strengthened well. Leaders and managers at all levels share a common vision of striving for the best outcomes for all pupils.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders are secure in their judgements about strengths in the quality of teaching in lessons. English and mathematics are led and managed securely.
- Monitoring and extremely robust data tracking are used effectively to identify how successfully pupils achieve and where additional learning gains can be made. Regular pupil

progress meetings enable members of the leadership team to ensure teachers are fully accountable for pupils' progress in key subjects.

- Senior leaders have begun to share the existing good practice which results in rapid progress for pupils, between teachers. When observing the work of teachers in school, senior leaders focus well on identifying the elements of teaching which are most successful. They do not always focus sufficiently on how well all pupils are progressing during individual lessons.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of activities which inspire and motivate pupils. Senior leaders ensure staff draw fully on the rich and diverse learning community to promote equality for all. The school effectively secures good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Senior leaders ensure the school works well with a range of partners who successfully support pupils' learning and development.
- Safeguarding procedures are well in place and meet requirements, ensuring that pupils are safe in school.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- the governing body has had a positive impact on challenging and supporting school leaders in their quest for improvement
 - under the strong leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body senior leaders are held to account robustly for pupils' achievement
 - ensures that rigorous procedures are in place to ensure the performance of staff is monitored effectively and they are held to account for pupils' progress
 - ensures the impact of pupil premium funding is robustly monitored
 - together with senior leaders ensure the capacity for further improvement is good.
-

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	124033
Local authority	Stoke on Trent
Inspection number	406208

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Jackson
Headteacher	Stephen Knight
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2011
Telephone number	01782 235377
Fax number	01782 235378
Email address	alexjun@sgfl.org.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

