

West Hill Primary School

High Mount Street, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 4BH

Inspection dates 11–12 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.

- Leaders' good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses has guided effective training and support for staff. This in turn has improved teaching and achievement.
- Pupils' progress has accelerated over the last three years, and is now good. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average.
- Pupils who find learning difficult are supported well in class and through carefully adapted additional support. As a result they achieve as well as other pupils.
- The large majority of teaching is good, and some is outstanding. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are increasing as teachers plan lessons that help pupils to build successfully on what they have learnt before.
- Teachers value pupils' efforts in lessons. This raises pupils' self-esteem and promotes good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and proud of their school. They behave well and have a good understanding of how to stay safe. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of interesting and motivating experiences that support their learning in all subjects. Music is exceptionally strong and the school is rightly proud of its steel band, which regularly performs to audiences outside school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing is not quite as good as in reading and mathematics.
- The way teachers mark pupils' work and give them opportunities pupils to check their own work is not consistently good across the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teachers and teaching assistants in 28 lessons, small group and individual support sessions. Eighteen teachers were observed, including those providing specialised subject teaching in music, French and physical education.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, including the subject leaders for English and mathematics, members of the governing body, pupils and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 15 parents through the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the findings of the school's survey completed in spring 2012 that represented the views of 127 parents.
- They also considered the views of 18 members of the teaching and non-teaching staff, as expressed through the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work in books and listened to some of them read.
- They looked at school documents, including those relating to safeguarding, school self-evaluation and school improvement. Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning and information relating to the monitoring and improvement of teaching.
- They evaluated information relating to pupils' attendance and their past and current progress and attainment.

Inspection team

Alison Cogher, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Bailey	Additional Inspector
Jane Moore	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is average in size but pupil numbers are increasing.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with fewer pupils than average from other ethnic groups. Very few pupils are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average. The most frequently identified needs are speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium) is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing to at least the levels reached in reading and mathematics by:
 - teaching a whole-school handwriting style that all adults model consistently well
 - pressing ahead with the plans to expand further the opportunities for pupils to write at length, and in subjects other than English.
- Improve the consistency and effectiveness of procedures for marking and pupils' self-evaluation to support learning by:
 - ensuring that all marking gives pupils clear information about what they have achieved and specific guidance on what they need to learn next
 - giving pupils time to respond quickly if asked to make corrections or complete a follow-up task
 - providing pupils in all classes with the opportunity to evaluate their own work, against specific criteria, so that they all have a good understanding of how well they are progressing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills and understanding at lower levels than those expected for their age. Changes made in the Early Years Foundation Stage have ensured that children now achieve well and leave the reception classes with broadly average attainment.
- Improvements to teaching have ensured that by the end of Year 1, most pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). This has helped pupils to make better progress in reading and writing than in previous years.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 has risen and is now broadly average overall. There have been marked improvements in all subjects, and pupils are achieving well. Although standards in writing are above average, fewer pupils do as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- In 2012, pupils in Year 6 attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Opportunities for pupils to write at length and in different subjects to improve their writing further have been identified and are being pursued. For example, pupils in Years 6 wrote a non-fiction report after their geography trip to Llandudno. This included subject-specific vocabulary, much of which was unfamiliar to pupils, such as 'cliff', 'headland' and 'sand dune'.
- No consistent handwriting style is taught consistently across the school, and adults model a variety of styles when working with pupils and marking their work. Consequently, pupils' handwriting is very variable and the presentation of their written work does not always match the good quality of the content.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress as they are supported well in lessons and in small group and individual sessions. The gap in attainment between this group and all pupils nationally has narrowed significantly in the recent past.
- The pupil premium has been spent well to ensure that gaps in attainment that previously existed between eligible pupils and other groups have been largely eradicated. Their attainment now compares well with that of other pupils nationally.
- The very few pupils learning English as an additional language receive good support. As a result, they make good progress and attain as well as their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn well because teachers engage them in a wide range of stimulating activities inside and outdoors. Adults support children well as they learn. For example, when working with their teacher to sort autumn leaves collected from a tree in the school grounds, children were encouraged to use a variety of words to describe colour and shape.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They manage behaviour well and ensure that lessons capture pupils' imagination and motivate them to learn.
- The planning of lessons takes account of pupils' previous learning and the approaches used

encourage pupils to get involved and work hard. For example, to make writing information text more fun, pupils in Year 6 were asked to describe a 'Miptor', an imaginary new species of animal that they as an explorer had discovered.

- Particularly good use is made of resources such as artefacts, information gathered from the internet, visits and visitors to stimulate pupils' interest in driving their own learning. For example, in a history lesson and in preparation for a visit to the city, pupils in Years 3 and 4 listened intently as survivors of the Coventry Blitz described events as they had experienced them. They went on to read newspaper accounts and looked at Second World War photographs to gain a better understanding of what it was like to live through those times.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to engage pupils of all abilities in lessons. All pupils' responses are valued, which supports their self-esteem and encourages them to tackle tasks that they find a challenge. Good use is made of pupils' explanations and solutions to help other pupils to learn. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, a pupil explained to others how he solved a problem related to calculating the perimeter of a shape. Teachers keep a check on pupils' progress during lessons and quickly correct errors and misunderstandings.
- Pupils develop good skills of cooperation and collaboration as they work together in lessons, and are keen to share ideas. In some classes, pupils are asked to evaluate their own work, although they are not routinely provided with specific criteria to help them understand how well they are progressing over time.
- Teachers mark pupils' work frequently but there is no consistent approach to ensure pupils are told clearly what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve. Similarly, inconsistencies are evident in the way pupils are expected to complete corrections or challenges set by their teacher. Teachers do not always give pupils the time to consider marking comments made, or to respond to them if that is what is expected.
- Regular assessments ensure that teachers are able to monitor pupils' progress over time, and to set them targets for improvement. These checks are also used well to plan support for pupils. This is effective in helping pupils whose progress is not considered to be good enough to catch up quickly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' good attendance reflects their enjoyment of school. They aspire to realise the school's mission statement: 'Together, we respect, we learn, we achieve.'
 - As a result of high-quality care and the good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the overwhelming majority of pupils behave well, work hard and develop positive relationships with adults and each other.
 - Very little disruption takes place in lessons. Although a few pupils need help to concentrate in lessons, the diligence of staff ensures that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare.
 - Good promotion of music and sport, and the commitment to providing exciting learning experiences, supports pupils' confidence and self-esteem very well. The positive impact of this approach is seen in the way pupils work and support each other and tackle with determination any tasks that they find difficult.
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- Pupils say they feel safe at school and are confident that they know how to keep themselves safe. They understand that bullying can take different forms, including cyber-bullying. They are keenly aware of the distress that can be caused through name-calling of any kind. Pupils are confident that any unacceptable behaviour, including bullying, although rare, is dealt with effectively.
- The school has secure systems for keeping pupils safe. This is acknowledged by the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View and the school's own questionnaire.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have a clear vision for school improvement. This is shared by staff and this collective drive has been key to securing good improvement in the recent past.
- Parental support for the school is good. It is actively encouraged through social events and more formal events that provide parents with information about their child's education and progress.
- Thorough checks on teaching quality and related training have secured improvements to teaching, and the results in terms of pupils' achievement are linked appropriately to teachers' salaries.
- Rigorous safeguarding of pupils' welfare and consistently implemented procedures for managing behaviour ensure that the school is an inclusive, safe environment that supports pupils' learning well.
- The school's spending of pupil premium funding has been effective. Some pupils have access to specific computer programs and some receive personalised support from teaching assistants. They all have access to music tuition and visits arranged by the school. The result of this approach is that these pupils are confident individuals who are keen to learn, and achieve as well as their peers.
- Thorough checking and analysis of data on pupils' progress ensure equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. The performance of different groups of pupils is looked at often, and with a critical eye. The school is constantly modifying the way it helps all pupils to better meet their needs, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Good planning ensures that pupils' learning in all subjects builds step-by-step as they move through the school. Links between subjects are made so that pupils have regular opportunities to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills. The school has recognised that more could be done to support writing by increasing these opportunities and providing more time for pupils to write at length.
- Wherever possible, visits, visitors and artefacts are used to stimulate pupils' interest and give meaning to their learning. By providing all pupils with the opportunity to learn to play an instrument in Year 3, the school ensures pupils are able to develop a skill that many choose to pursue further. Being involved in music has a positive impact on pupils' academic achievement as well as their personal development.
- Partnership work with other schools has supported improvements to teaching, particularly in

expanding the methods teachers employ to help pupils learn more effectively.

- The local authority has provided good support to develop the Early Years Foundation Stage and the quality of teaching in reading and mathematics. Leadership in these areas has improved as a result of the support provided, and the school is well placed to maintain the momentum of improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- is good, and provides both challenge and support for senior leaders by being well informed and contributing to the school self-evaluation process
 - ensures that resources, including the pupil premium funding, are used well to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
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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	124072
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	402224

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Parkes
Headteacher	Shaun Miles
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2010
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