

Scholar Green Primary School

Congleton Road, Scholar Green, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 3HF

Inspection dates 10–11 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.

- The headteacher and senior leaders have very successfully focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Consequently the school continues to improve.
- All pupils, including children in the Reception class and those identified as having special educational needs achieve well in a range of subjects including English and mathematics. From their starting points they make good progress as they move through the school.
- The teaching of reading is effective.
- Teachers are good at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum. The pupils are rightly proud of their Green Flag award as an ECO school.
- Pupils' behaviour is typically good in lessons and as they move around the school. They show respect and kindness towards each other, staff and visitors. Pupils say that they feel totally safe in school.
- Attendance is consistently above average.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are inconsistencies in teaching.
- In some lessons pupils are not developing as resilient, independent learners.
- Pupil's progress in writing is good but it is not as rapid as that in reading and mathematics.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teacher's marking.
- The school has identified that although disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress overall, their progress in reading is not as fast as it could be.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by six teachers. Three of these were joint observations with the head teacher. In addition, the inspector visited specialist sessions where small groups of pupils were given additional support by teaching assistants.
- The inspector listened to groups of pupils read in Years 2 and 6.
- Meetings and discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school staff, parents and carers, a representative from the local authority and informal conversations were held with parents and carers bringing their children to school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, progress data, safeguarding information and 30 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Judith Straw, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Scholar Green is a smaller than average sized primary school. Three of the six classes currently have pupils from more than one age group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is a little higher than average as is the proportion of pupils assessed at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is low.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school holds a number of awards in recognition of its work. These include the Green Flag ECO award, the gold Wildlife-Friendly garden award, Cheshire healthy schools award and, in 2011, two pupils won the 'Energy Monitors of the Year' award.
- There is a privately run pre-school setting which also provides before and after-school care on the same site which is subject to a separate inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of outstanding teaching so that pupils make rapid and sustained progress in both English and mathematics by:
 - always giving pupils an appropriate balance of opportunities to learn independently as well as listening to their teachers
 - ensuring that work is even more closely matched to pupils' levels of ability
 - making sure that teachers regularly refer to pupils' targets in lessons and when they are marking pupils' work
 - improving the consistency in marking, particularly in writing, and expecting a response from pupils to teachers' comments.
- Ensure pupils make as much progress as possible in writing by:
 - setting higher expectations for the quality and quantity of work in pupils' books
 - giving pupils time to improve their written work.
- Further embed strategies to accelerate even more progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in reading.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. The impact of good teaching is evident in all classes. For example, in an outstanding Year 5/6 lesson pupils worked in a spirit of friendly competition to write the most exciting and creative sentences in their accounts of myths. Pupils were engrossed in their work and made great strides forward in their learning.
- In other lessons most pupils work hard, respond well to their teachers and concentrate on what they are doing. Most pupils have a very positive attitude to learning. However, a small minority of pupils rely too much on the teacher and are not resilient when they tackle more challenging problems.
- The close partnership with the privately run pre-school setting ensures that transition into the school is seamless for most children. Children enter the Reception class with attainment that is in line with what is expected for their age. They make good progress and become confident learners. They enjoy working both indoors and in the stimulating outside classroom areas.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and 2. Achievement has risen over the last two years so that attainment is above average at the end of Year 6. More pupils than expected nationally now reach the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics. In Key Stage 1 their confidence in handling numbers increases so that by the end of Year 6 many apply their skills to solve problems across the curriculum.
- In writing, pupils are working with greater confidence but do not always extend their basic skills in lessons by responding to advice from teachers on how to improve.
- Reading is enjoyed by many across the school. Older pupils read widely and often and can discuss their books with pleasure. The progress in reading is slower for some of the disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school has implemented a strategy to support these readers and to accelerate their progress. Their overall progress is good.
- There is virtually no gap in the achievement of girls, boys and those pupils known to be entitled to receive the pupil premium.
- Pupils develop good communication skills and are keen to succeed. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching **is good**

- Teaching, including that of English and mathematics, is consistently good across the school which is why pupils are making good progress and achieving well.
- Teachers plan their lessons well with clear aims so that pupils know what they are going to learn and how they can judge if they have been successful. Most lessons are planned to provide challenge and high expectations for all pupils. Pupils' best work is displayed and celebrated.
- Relationships are good with teachers and pupils showing mutual respect for each other.
- Nearly all lessons are timed and split into chunks so that learning is rapid and pupils are kept busy throughout the session. Just occasionally the pace is slower and there are some missed opportunities to extend learning by using incisive questioning.
- In a minority of lessons, work is less well matched to pupils' abilities and this sometimes slows the pace of learning and progress.
- Marking is good in mathematics but less effective in writing. Not enough advice is given to pupils on how to improve their work and whether they are reaching their targets. Pupils do not often respond to the comments in their books and so it is unclear if they have taken account of the advice to raise their attainment.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported by skilled

teaching assistants either in class or working in smaller independent groups. Teaching assistants are very well informed about what is expected so their work has a significant impact on the progress of these pupils. Some of the pupils have made slower progress in reading. As a result, adjustments have been made to support these pupils with a focus on regular practice and improved understanding about the sounds that letters make. It is too soon to see what impact this is having.

- Across the school teachers use a range of strategies to accelerate the reading skills of middle and higher ability pupils to maximise their potential. The benefits of this are already seen in a higher proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 at the end of Year 2 and Level 5 at the end of Year 6. Reading is celebrated across the curriculum with attractive displays on World Book day and 'reasons for reading'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils typically behave well. In lessons they show respect for each other and their teachers. They work well together in pairs or groups and are sensitive to the needs of others. At break and lunch time pupils take advantage of the extensive and beautiful school grounds and play vigorously but with a keen respect for their environment.
- A very small minority of pupils occasional behave in a challenging way. Staff manage pupils' behaviour well, so that lessons are rarely disrupted.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying and insist there is no bullying or name-calling. Any disputes are usually the result of friends falling out, but then quickly becoming friends again.
- Attendance is consistently well above average and reflects the enjoyment pupils have in attending school.
- The responses on Parent View, as well as the school's own parental surveys, show that the great majority of parents believe behaviour to be well managed and that their children are safe. Several parents commented on the improvements in behaviour over recent times.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and both the school council and the ECO council are very active in developing initiatives to improve the school, such as a project on enhancing the playground and facilities for growing vegetables.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders responded positively to the recommendations in the last inspection report and have succeeded in improving teaching and provision in the Reception class. The focus on improving mathematics last year has been successful and attainment has risen across the school. Senior leaders are ambitious to improve the school further and this vision is shared by all staff.
- Senior and middle leaders know their school's strengths and have a clear understanding of what needs to be improved. The expertise and effective support of the local authority and other independent consultants has enhanced teachers' professional development and only a few areas remain that require attention. Performance management is linked closely to school priorities and individual needs.
- The tracking of pupils' progress is accurate and effective. If pupils are identified as falling behind, extra support is provided so that they quickly make up lost ground. This supports the school's promotion of equality of opportunity and can be seen in the attention now being given to improve reading for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The pupil premium funding is used wisely to provide extra academic support for pupils especially in writing and mathematics. This support is effective in enabling these pupils to make good progress.
- Leaders recognise that in attempting to develop a more creative curriculum in the past, the

school lost sight of the important basic skills. The balance has been addressed and key skills are now at the core of the curriculum which meets pupils' needs well. A wide range of trips, visits and clubs enrich pupils' experiences and add to their enjoyment in learning.

- The great majority of parents are pleased with what the school offers and confirm that the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. A very small minority of parents expressed concern about the progress their children make in mixed-age classes. This was discussed with senior leaders. Inspection evidence shows that these pupils are making the same good progress as pupils in single-age classes.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very supportive of the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well. They ensure that children are safe and that the school's systems for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.
 - Members of the governing body provide support and challenge in equal measure and their actions are having a positive impact on improving the school.
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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	111039
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	405314

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Pat Morgan
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2010
Telephone number	01270 685181
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