

# The Richard Heathcote Community Primary School

The Drive, Alsagers Bank, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 8BB

**Inspection dates** 23–24 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 to 6.
- All groups achieve well, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teaching is good. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils work hard. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of interesting and relevant experiences that they enjoy.
- Pupils' behaviour is good so that the school is well-ordered and lessons flow smoothly. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive.
- Pupils feel extremely safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and secure.
- The headteacher's drive to improve the school is enthusiastically shared by staff. Leaders, including the governing body, successfully use training to improve the quality of teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not always demanding enough to ensure that individual pupils do as well as they can.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils have acted upon the advice in their books.
- A rapid pace of learning is not always sustained in parts of lessons in the Nursery and Reception classes.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the teaching in all classes. They visited 19 lessons taught by six teachers. The headteacher joined inspectors for several of these visits and inspectors observed her reporting back to teachers on the quality of learning and pupils' achievement seen.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, teachers and the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence including hearing pupils read, records of pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, behaviour logs and the results of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the work pupils were doing in their books.
- The views of 20 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. The views of parents who met an inspector at the school gate were also considered.

## Inspection team

Gerald Griffin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Howland

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- A smaller-than-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those from families in the services (such as the army) and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Raise teaching and rates of progress to outstanding by:
  - ensuring that the tasks set for pupils in lessons are sufficiently demanding for each member of the class
  - checking that pupils always act upon the written comments in their books
  - sustaining a rapid pace to learning in creative development lessons and those extending children's knowledge and understanding of the world in the Nursery and Reception classes.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with knowledge, skills and understanding at expected levels for their age. Last year they joined the school below expectations. Children make generally good progress in all areas of learning and this summer reached attainment that was average at the end of their Reception Year.
- While children's progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development is good, it is not as quick as in other areas of learning. This is because they do not have enough opportunities to investigate ideas in detail and to perform together, for example, in dance and music.
- Pupils' progress is good in Years 1 to 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Last summer pupils left Year 6 with above-average attainment. When writing, pupils use vocabulary and punctuation skilfully to express their ideas clearly in many different ways, such as factual accounts, letters and stories.
- Progress in reading is good because pupils have well-developed skills in linking letters to the sounds they make (phonics). They are keen to read and do so regularly. Attainment in reading is currently above average in Year 2. Additionally, they have a good understanding of the material they read and this is supported well by parents of younger pupils reading with their children at home.
- Progress in mathematics, which has been slower than that in English over the past few years, has improved. This is because teachers are now skilled in teaching pupils to solve mathematical problems. In an outstanding Year 2 lesson, pupils made very good progress in ordering random numbers and writing down any that were missing. Pupils use their mathematics skills competently to measure in science and in design and technology.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs concentrate well in lessons. Their good progress is secured by effective teaching, which enables them to achieve small but demanding steps in learning.
- The school provides effective support for those pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and ensures that they, too, make good progress. For example, the school has trained adults to support the needs of those pupils who have emotional difficulties so that they are able to concentrate in lessons and make similar progress to their classmates.
- Pupil's good progress and positive attitudes mean that they are well prepared for secondary school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' questions are probing and make pupils think deeply. They use resources such as computers and educational games effectively to deepen pupils' understanding.
- In the large majority of lessons, teachers use test and other data well to plan demanding tasks that stretch all members of the class. Occasionally, work set for some pupils is either too hard or too easy and their pace of learning slows.

- In the Nursery and Reception classes, teachers plan a good balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities in an exciting setting. Learning takes place inside and outdoors, and develops children's understanding well. Teachers do not plan investigations and opportunities for children to perform as well as they plan tasks in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers plan many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, Year 6 pupils told an inspector that in a recent philosophy lesson they had reflected deeply on how their actions might affect the feelings and emotions of those around them.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support, especially for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. For example, they take notes on pupils' progress and pass them to the teacher to help plan the next steps in their learning.
- Marking and feedback provide pupils with a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. However, teachers do not consistently check that pupils have acted upon this good advice.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Parents, school records and discussions with pupils confirm that good behaviour is the norm.
- Pupils are polite, enthusiastic and have positive attitudes towards school and learning. They cooperate and collaborate well in groups.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They are fully aware of its different forms, such as prejudice-based bullying. They say that there is no bullying in school. Pupils are highly confident that if any bullying did take place it would be quickly resolved by the school.
- Pupils feel very safe and know precisely how to keep themselves safe, for example when moving through the school's narrow corridors.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting the pupils' enjoyment of school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- School leaders, including the governing body, aim high. Teaching has improved and there have been more opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills in their work since the previous inspection. Additionally, pupils can make choices about what they learn and so gain independence. This shows the school is well placed to improve further.
- Leaders make thorough checks on teaching and the quality of learning, and plan purposefully to tackle weaknesses and to improve teachers' skills. For example, training is underway to develop aspects of teachers' planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Performance management of teaching is rigorous. Only those teachers that have met the challenging targets set by the school for the progress of children in their class are considered for additional pay.

- Leaders' regularly check on the progress made by each pupil and the resulting support and guidance make sure that individual pupils quickly close any gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They use this information to provide good individual support. The help provided for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is very effective.
- The local authority has made a strong contribution to the training of school leaders and to improving the teaching of English.
- Nearly all parents expressed positive views about their children's progress, teaching and the leadership of the school. The school provides meetings that are well attended by parents, for example about phonics, that help them to support their child's learning at home.
- The way subjects are taught strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the school provides many opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding and respect for cultures that are different from their own. The school organises a wide range of clubs for its pupils.
- The school completes all statutory checks on the suitability of staff to be employed. Child protection training for staff is thorough, and leaders implement child protection policies rigorously.
- Leaders have a clear commitment to combating discrimination and promoting equal opportunities, as shown in the good progress made by all groups of pupils, from all backgrounds. They foster good relations with outside agencies and other schools to improve pupils' life chances even more.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well informed about the school's performance and how well finance such as the pupil premium funding is spent. This comes about through their visits to see the school at work and from detailed reports by school staff. They use this information to ask searching questions of senior leaders and, as a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has improved. Governors support strongly staff training, for example, through the sharing of good practice with other local schools that has sharpened teachers' skills and improved pupils' achievement. They also keep a careful eye on performance management arrangements to see that robust targets are set and that performance is linked to pay.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132043
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402532

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rob Jeffries
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Banks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 720406
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 720406
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