

Spon Gate Primary School

Upper Spon Street, Coventry, CV1 3BQ

Inspection dates 21–22 November 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 has been highly effective in leading the changes that have resulted in rapid improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. He is ably supported by senior leaders.
- From very low starting points, pupils make good progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The high number of pupils who are new to learning English, those who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium make good and at times outstanding progress. This is because of the good-quality support they receive.
- Teaching is good, with some outstanding practice.
- Pupils enjoy a wide variety of exciting visits, residential stays and visitors to school throughout the year.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well, and enjoy their learning, which is clearly reflected in their above-average attendance. They also have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying.
- Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed and results in the children making good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in English and mathematics is not above the national average.
- Teachers do not always give hard enough work to more-able pupils to enable them to reach the higher levels.
- The recently introduced marking policy is not used consistently to improve pupils' work.
- Teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and to explore their own ideas.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons involving 10 teachers.
- Inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and reviewed documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils’ progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils’ work. They heard groups of pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Inspectors took account of the six responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by parents and carers who spoke with inspectors at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Neil Gillespie	Additional Inspector
Christine Young	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Spon Gate Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who start at the school speaking English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual times is higher than in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding and so raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - sharing more widely the outstanding practice that is already present in the school
 - making sure that teachers plan activities that always stretch the more-able pupils to learn at a swifter pace
 - giving pupils more opportunities to learn to work independently
 - ensuring that marking is used consistently to show pupils how they can improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery with low skill levels, with many at the very early stages of speaking English. As a result of good teaching, they make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in their communication skills, but still start Key Stage 1 with skill levels below those expected for their age. All groups of pupils make good progress from this point and leave Year 6 with skills and knowledge that are broadly average.
- Attainment in both English and mathematics has seen a steady rise over the past three years. Gaps between groups have closed. Standards rose in the 2012 national tests at the end of Year 6 with an increased number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in writing is accelerating due to improved teaching, a faster pace of learning and good opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects. Writing tasks are well structured and supported so that all pupils can achieve well. They often start with a considerable amount of discussion, which develops vocabulary well.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide a learning mentor, a counsellor, and additional teaching assistants who give extra teaching support, individually or in small groups as appropriate. Due to this, the eligible pupils make at least good progress so that the gap between their achievement and their peers is narrowing quickly.
- Pupils who are at any early stage of learning English are submerged in a rich environment of language, books and vocabulary and, as a result, make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported by well-trained teaching assistants which results in good progress for most pupils. The additional support that these pupils receive is managed very effectively by the inclusion manager and well matched to pupils' individual needs. In a few lessons, there are times when the teaching assistants are not so actively involved and the support is not as effective
- Pupils who join the school partway through their primary education are quickly supported so that any interruption to their learning is kept to a minimum and they do as well as their peers in school and nationally.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. Pupils have a good grasp of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and they are competent and confident readers. By the end Year 6, their attainment in reading is broadly average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. An increasing number of lessons are outstanding, although teachers have not all had the opportunity to learn from the examples of very best practice in the school. Teachers use a wide range of lively and imaginative activities that capture pupils' interests and enable them to make good progress.
- In the outstanding lessons, teachers plan tasks that rapidly build on what the pupils are already able to do and make them think hard. All groups of pupils are fully engaged throughout and make rapid progress.

- Teachers know their pupils well so their lesson planning generally matches pupils' different abilities. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers do not always ensure that more-able pupils are fully challenged.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and standards of work are high. The few pupils who find it difficult to control their behaviour are exceptionally well managed by the teachers and adults assigned to support them. Pupils respond well to the school's reward systems.
- Classrooms are bright and pupils' learning is supported through helpful displays and practical resources. Teachers are good role models and encourage pupils to show respect and consideration for each other in their learning. Consequently, pupils feel confident to 'have a go'.
- In a small number of lessons, teachers tend to exercise too much control and do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop their independence or explore their own ideas.
- The recently introduced marking policy has helped most teachers provide clearer guidance to pupils on how to improve, which many pupils respond to positively. However, there are still inconsistencies in how pupils are informed about their next steps in learning and when they are expected to respond to teachers' comments.
- Promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is intrinsic to the school's inclusive culture and is promoted well by teachers. They constantly promote positive relationships and encourage an excitement in learning. The rich mix of cultures and religions within the school is used effectively to promote understanding and to celebrate cultural differences.
- All groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language are taught well and make good progress. Transition into the school is well managed so that teachers are able to quickly identify and meet the pupils' needs.
- Reading is taught well. Teachers and teaching assistants successfully promote the pupils' knowledge and use of phonics. They provide interesting opportunities for pupils to read, both for enjoyment and to find information to support their topic work. The sharing of a 'class book', workshops for parents and a book fair all help to develop a reading culture across the school.
- Teachers create opportunities to write in many different contexts, which develop pupils' interests and stamina for writing. During the inspection, pupils wrote newspaper reports about 'Children in Need' and compared life in Sparta and Athens. Before they wrote about an imaginary animal, pupils in Year 4 talked to their teacher and to each other about their ideas, which the teacher then used to model the writing effectively. This talk developed pupils' language and vocabulary exceptionally well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' behaviour is equally good around school.
- Support for pupils and their families is well organised and highly effective. Parents and carers said that 'all staff go the extra mile' to ensure that all pupils are able to access high-quality

learning and enrichment activities so that they are engaged and achieve well. Staff know the pupils and their families extremely well.

- Pupils' respect for adults and each other, and their clear understanding of how they are expected to behave, are strong features of lessons that enable most to proceed without disruption. Pupils say they like the rewards they get for good work and behaviour.
- The school's culture 'caught being good' promotes a calm and positive learning environment. School records confirm that pupils' behaviour is good on a daily basis and is improving over time.
- The school has close working relationships with a number of outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Attendance is above average reflecting the effective work of the learning mentor.
- Parents and carers said their children are safe and well cared for. This view is reflected in the confidence expressed by pupils that they are safe at school and that any bullying is dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good knowledge of all forms of bullying, for example cyber-bullying, and have great trust in the headteacher to solve any difficulties that arise. Staff ensure that there is no discrimination and that all pupils have the best opportunities to achieve.
- Pupils are helped to develop a range of strategies so they are able to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with the internet, drugs and roads.

The leadership and management are good

- Improvements since the previous inspection have been consistent and effective. This is because leaders and managers at all levels have been relentless in their drive to improve teaching and raise achievement. The headteacher actively promotes high expectations. He has managed the pace of change very effectively so that there is a common sense of purpose and staff morale is high.
 - Regular lesson observations followed by detailed feedback to teachers and a successful programme of professional development have ensured that virtually all teaching is good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. The headteacher's uncompromising drive has ensured that standards are continuing to rise.
 - The headteacher manages the performance of teachers effectively, with clear links between the salary that teachers receive and pupils' good progress. Teachers are set precise targets linked to pupils' progress, thus promoting good or better teaching.
 - Rigorous checks are made to find out how well pupils achieve. Staff routinely check that all pupils are on track to make good progress from their low starting points. Middle leaders are increasingly involved in monitoring teaching and are accountable for pupils' progress.
 - Leaders and managers know the school well. There are clear plans to make it even better. The school's consistent, marked improvement over time demonstrates good capacity to improve.
 - The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. There are no inequalities in pupils' achievement and no incidents of harassment.
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- Partnerships with parents and carers are fostered through regular communication and opportunities for them to share their views. The headteacher and deputy headteacher's constant presence around the school and at the start and end of the school day is highly effective in cementing strong relationships.
- Topics bring together different subjects in a way that the pupils describe as 'fun'. The range of subjects and activities contribute strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Lessons are enriched extremely well through a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities and by opportunities for pupils to learn a foreign language. Visits, including residential visits and opportunities to develop musical, sporting and artistic skills, add further enhancement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body makes use of its recent training to both support and monitor the work of the school and has a clear strategy to improve the school further. Governors understand the school's performance information well and how the school has improved. They provide good support to the headteacher and senior leaders because they are increasingly able to ask the difficult questions about how decisions will have an impact on pupils' learning. The governing body is regularly kept informed about how teaching is improving, which governors follow up in their regular visits. This has led to good decisions being made on the rewards that teachers receive, effective allocation of the school's finances and the pupil premium, which it monitors through regular visits. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed, regularly reviewed and fully meet the regulatory requirements.
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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	131241
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	402455

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	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Hartnett
Headteacher	Jamie Wingrove
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2010
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