

St John's CofE (C) Primary School

Mill Lane, Wetley Rocks, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 0BN

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Learning and progress are good. Teachers plan lessons that are interesting and they give good support so that pupils are able to complete tasks independently.
- Outstanding teaching of reading ensures pupils make excellent progress in the subject.
- Highly positive relationships give pupils the confidence to try new things.
- The school gives excellent care and support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, which help them to make outstanding progress.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is exemplary.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The headteacher has high expectations for pupils' learning and personal development. Everyone is involved in sustaining the school's strong ethos.
- Whole-staff commitment backed up by well-planned training continues to improve the quality of teaching across the school.
- Governors are very well organised and give the school good support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some boys are still not reaching the same high standards in their writing as they do in their reading.
- Teachers do not always check and change tasks early enough in lessons to ensure that they support and challenge the learning of all pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by eight teachers. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons to observe learning in music, design technology, history, information and communication technology and science.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work in books and on display, past and current information about pupils' progress, and documents relating to behaviour, staff training, safeguarding, monitoring and school improvement planning.
- Inspectors held meetings with small groups of pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors talked to parents and carers informally at the start of the day and took into account 29 responses in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own survey.

Inspection team

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Edwards

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Johns CE Primary School is smaller than average.
- Nearly all pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who receive extra funding from the government (pupil premium) because of their eligibility for free school meals or who are in care is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expected standard for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a learning community with other local schools.
- There is a privately run and managed breakfast and after-school club at the school. This was not part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure boys reach the same high standards in writing as they do in reading by embedding:
 - the planning of writing activities that always give pupils a purpose and reason to write
 - opportunities in lessons for pupils to check their spelling, punctuation and grammar after finishing a piece of writing.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers always check early enough in lessons that tasks support and challenge the learning of all pupils and adjust them if necessary
 - continuing to share and adopt outstanding practices within the school and within its partner schools.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in the Reception class settle quickly into school because relationships are positive and routines are clearly established. They enjoy choosing from a varied range of activities that are well planned to ensure that they make good progress. Nearly all children reach and a good number exceed average levels in all areas of learning by the time that they start in Year 1.
- Pupils in Reception and Year 1 have a good knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds that they make which is giving them an excellent start to their reading. An above average number of pupils reached expected levels in the Year 1 phonics test last year. For the last two years, pupils' attainment in reading has been significantly above average by the end of Year 2. This is an improvement on previous years when attainment in reading was average.
- All pupils continue to make excellent progress in Years 3 to 6 in their reading to reach significantly above average levels by the end of Year 6. Pupils read widely and independently in many subjects, both for pleasure and to research for information to support their personal projects.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and writing and attainment is above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was average. Pupils solve mathematical problems independently and use their knowledge of numbers to calculate quickly.
- While girls reach the same above-average levels in writing as they do in reading, not all boys do. The focus on always having a purpose for writing and checking carefully that spellings, punctuation and grammar are accurate are starting to help boys close the gap.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. They receive excellent targeted support to enable them to reach their potential. Most pupils who receive extra support in younger classes no longer require this by the time they reach Year 6.
- Pupils who receive extra funding make good progress. Close monitoring to make sure that the progress of this group of pupils is not slipping and focused interventions when found to do so is making sure that they reach the same above-average levels as their classmates.
- Pupils have good computer skills which they use well to research for information and to present their learning. Notably, too, all pupils sing to a high standard. The whole choir enjoyed its recent participation in 'Songs of Praise' and its first visit to sing in Germany.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers always use assessment information to guide their planning and teaching. They refer to the assessment focus in lessons to ensure that teaching always guides pupils' planned learning.
- Adults in the reception class work well together to support the children's learning and development. Teaching is most effective when one adult works with particular children on specific knowledge and skills while the other joins in with activities that the children have chosen themselves to guide and build their learning while they play.

- Progress is outstanding when teachers check pupils' learning early in lessons and change tasks when they find that they are too easy or too difficult. This is not consistent in all lessons and so sometimes pupils tackle tasks that they find too difficult or complete ones that are too easy.
- Teachers have started to plan writing activities that have a clear purpose, such as writing letters to soldiers in Afghanistan, compiling a recipe book with partner schools abroad and entering writing competitions. This is motivating boys to write and helping them to start to close the gap with their achievement in reading.
- The teaching of reading is outstanding. Teachers give pupils who at times find reading difficult extra daily support with individual skills, often choosing texts that are repetitive to help them to read at a faster pace. This builds their confidence as well as their comprehension skills.
- Teachers and teaching assistants ask questions that help pupils to think for themselves how to solve problems in mathematics or to search for evidence to support their understanding when reading, for example.
- Teaching prompts and posters act as effective reminders to pupils about how to complete tasks. 'Sentence menus', put together with pupils, remind them to use a range of different types of sentences to create the most effect and get their message across to the intended reader. Pupils do not have enough opportunity in some lessons or at a later date to check and correct their spellings, punctuation and grammar.
- Teachers' marking has improved significantly but is still better in some classes than others. The best gives pupils additional short tasks that, when completed, improves their learning. Targets for reading, mathematics and writing help to focus pupils' attention when they work independently of the teacher.
- Homework is relevant and supports learning in school effectively. Pupils often carry out research, plan writing and learn important spellings and multiplication facts. In addition, pupils read at home every day, which makes a strong contribution to pupils' excellent progress in reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' attitudes are exemplary. They concentrate extremely well in lessons, listening carefully to teachers to make sure that they are clear about what they are learning and why.
- Daily lessons and numerous extra activities such as bullying presentations and workshops, the 'Life Education Caravan' and road safety events give pupils a good understanding of different types of bullying and how to stay safe. Pupils say that bullying very rarely happens and if it does are confident that issues are dealt with extremely quickly. Younger pupils say that older pupils 'take great care not to hurt us'.
- Everyone treats each other with respect because relationships are extremely positive and pupils have a strong moral and social code. Pupils give each other considerable support to ensure everyone can take part in all activities. This includes helping disabled pupils get around the school and enabling them to take part in playtime games and sporting activities.
- Pupils have high levels of responsibility which they take very seriously indeed. All pupils support the eco-committee's drive to sustain the school's green credentials, resulting in considerable savings to energy and water costs and in the award of the 'Green Flag' for a second time. The

school council plays a full and active role in the school's decision-making processes.

- Pupils have high expectations for their own and others' behaviour because they are fully involved in deciding the rules and what happens on the very rare occasions someone forgets. All pupils understand that occasionally some pupils need extra support to help them to always behave well and go out of their way to help them to do this. As a result, the conduct of pupils with behavioural difficulties improves dramatically within a short time of starting at the school.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in high attendance and excellent punctuality. Despite there being a number of pupils with specific medical needs, the attendance rate has been above average for several years.

The leadership and management are good

- The school checks its performance closely and follows detailed plans that are working well to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. Particularly strong is the established vision for the school's ethos which prepares pupils' extremely well for living in a multicultural and multi-faith society. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The extra funding for pupils eligible for pupil premium is spent on providing additional support for learning and personal development and to ensure everyone is involved in all school events regardless of the ability to pay. Individual support in reading and writing lessons and small group activities supports these pupils well to help them make good progress. For example, they are given the opportunity to talk about personal difficulties in 'Little Thinkers'. Spending is monitored closely to make sure the extra funding is always being used efficiently and making a difference to learning and progress.
- Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching are robust. The information is used to identify improvement targets and to plan relevant training that helps individual teacher improve; and also to ensure that aspects of the school's work in need of improvement are tackled quickly and effectively. The monitoring of performance is used well to make decisions about pay.
- The local authority gives good support to the school's work, supporting the school's monitoring and improvement planning and subsequent teacher training and development.
- The partnership with local schools is developing well in supporting teaching and providing additional activities for all pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils visit the secondary school to enjoy science activities and sporting activities, and more-able and talented pupils attend workshops that extend their learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors check that the quality of teaching, the curriculum and resources are making the expected difference to pupils' learning progress. A business plan details precisely what needs to be done and by when and identifies precisely how money will be spent to drive up standards and achievement further. Governors meet regularly with staff and pupils to gather their views about all aspects of the school's work and are fully committed and take full responsibility for their role in the school's continued improvement. Safeguarding arrangements are robust.

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	124283
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	403552

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fiona Stagg
Headteacher	Diana Higton
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2008
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