

Fulford Primary School

Fulford Road, Fulford, Stoke-on-Trent, ST11 9QT

Inspection dates

5–6 December 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.

- Children in Reception make good progress as soon as they start school and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress. Results at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics are higher than the national averages.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given the support they need to make good progress.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers, who have high expectations of the pupils.
- Pupils behave well, in and out of lessons. They enjoy being at school and their attendance is above average.
- The headteacher knows the school well and has instilled a strong culture of success and good achievement. She is ably supported by an effective team of teachers who work well together.
- The governing body and senior leaders have a clear vision for improvement in the school and are focused well on ensuring all pupils make better progress in every year group. They have worked relentlessly to ensure the teaching is at least consistently good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not make sure that lessons proceed briskly or that work is challenging enough for the more-able pupils, whose progress, consequently, slows.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to check each other's work and so understand how to improve their own work.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to learn without the help of the teacher and so they do not make as much progress as they could, especially in their writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, three of them jointly with the headteacher. In addition, he made a number of short visits to other lessons and sampled pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, teachers, teaching assistants, members of the governing body, a local authority adviser and informally with parents and carers.
- The inspector scrutinised a variety of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plans, behaviour records, and documents relating to the management of teachers' performance.
- The inspector also considered the views expressed in nine questionnaires returned by school staff, along with the 23 responses submitted by parents and carers to the online Parent View survey.

Inspection team

Keith Brown, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- It serves the village of Fulford and surrounding villages.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are none who speak English as an additional language.
- Currently the proportion of pupils receiving extra support through school action is broadly average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs. In recent years these proportions have been above average.
- There are separate classes for children in Reception and Year 3. Pupils in other years are taught in mixed-age classes.
- 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?

- Make more teaching and learning outstanding by:
 - ensuring learning always happens at a brisk pace and more-able pupils get demanding work in every lesson
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to check each other's work, so that they gain a better understanding of how to improve their own work
 - giving pupils more opportunities to learn actively and independently, especially in written work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The ability of children on entry to the school varies widely from year to year and numbers are small. However, most children start at the school with knowledge and skills below those that are typical nationally. Good progress is made in the Reception year. When children enter Year 1, they are working confidently in all areas of learning.
- Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils' results in the national English and mathematical tests are above average.
- Pupils make a good start to their reading in the younger classes because the sounds that letters make (phonics) are taught well. Pupils in all years have effective, well-planned, guided reading sessions. They have developed good skills for reading new and difficult words because they are well supported by teachers and other adults. Older pupils read regularly and with enjoyment.
- Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects and this helps them to make good progress. In science, pupils are taught how to plan and carry out experiments effectively and make well-considered conclusions. A group of Year 2 pupils, for example, quickly grasped the essential differences between reversible and non-reversible changes when materials were heated.
- Achievement in other subjects and skills is good. Although pupils make good progress in writing, there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently in developing their written skills. However, pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are often used independently. For example, Year 3 pupils looked at text from a novel on the internet, and then used software successfully to change verbs in the text.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. Their needs are identified early and work is matched closely to the pupils' ability levels. They receive well-focused help, as needed, from teachers and teaching assistants, which ensures their rate of progress is as good as that of other pupils.
- The school gives special assistance to the pupils eligible for the pupil premium. Support, such as additional English and mathematics teaching time, one-to-one tuition and funding for educational visits is becoming more effective in overcoming the barriers these pupils face in their learning. As a result, any gap between these pupils' attainment and progress and that of their peers is closing rapidly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with some outstanding. Teachers provide stimulating classroom environments and create a positive climate for good learning where pupils celebrate each other's success. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and support and challenge pupils well.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and explain clearly what they want pupils to do. Work is carefully modified for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as effectively meeting the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes.

- Where learning is best, teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable for pupils. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. For example, in a high-quality mathematics lesson, the teacher's questioning ensured that a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils had a good grasp of some complex decimal calculations.
- Although teachers plan lessons effectively, occasionally they do not include opportunities for pupils to learn actively and independently, especially in writing tasks. In a few lessons seen, teaching did not demand enough of the pupils and the pace of learning was not fast enough, particularly for the more-able pupils.
- Teachers make good use of data which show pupils' attainment and progress over time and measures pupils' current rates of progress. Teachers then identify pupils who are falling behind and set them targets to aim for which will fully stretch their thinking and effort.
- Pupils all understand the school's 'tickled pink' and 'green for growth' marking system. Teachers praise high-quality work appropriately and give clear directions on how pupils can improve. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn from each other by checking each other's work more regularly in lessons, so that they can understand better how to improve their own work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The good behaviour in the school contributes to the calm, purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are polite and confident in conversation with staff and visitors. They have good attitudes towards learning. Parents and carers are very positive about behaviour in the school.
- Older pupils are keen to accept extra responsibilities and they take these very seriously. They enjoy being playground 'buddies' and act as reading mentors to Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils. The school council is influential and has helped raise considerable sums of money for the benefit of the school, for example to buy extra playground equipment.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying and cyber bullying, and know what to do if it occurs. Pupils say bullying is very rare but if there are any incidents, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school carefully records these very rare occurrences and the action taken.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents and carers agree. It provides a safe and secure environment that is valued and appreciated by everyone. Pupils of all ages work and play together very well.
- Pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and arrive at lessons promptly. The school's robust actions ensure that pupils' attendance is consistently above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and assistant headteacher provide strong leadership. They have high aspirations and a clear vision for the future of the school. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and identifies strengths and areas for improvement.
- There is a good team spirit among staff and morale is high. The work of all staff and the governing body is successfully focused on improving pupils' achievement through good teaching.
- Leaders' close checking on the quality of teaching has highlighted areas where individual teachers have weaknesses. Well-focused support and effective training are provided to secure improvements in teaching. Increasingly, training takes place jointly across a 'cluster' of partner primary schools, so that teachers can exchange ideas and share the best examples.
- Teachers are held accountable for the progress of their pupils and for the subject areas they lead. This approach is reflected in setting targets for teachers to improve their performance, where discretionary pay awards have to be earned.
- The school development plan sets out well-focused strategies for meeting ambitious improvement targets. Careful tracking of the progress of groups and individuals helps pupils to meet their potential, combats discrimination and ensures equal opportunity for all.
- The range of subjects and activities that pupils receive is well matched to their learning needs and is pivotal in securing their positive engagement and good achievement. However, there is scope for greater challenge to be given to more-able pupils on some occasions.
- Pupils say they enjoy the regular 'theme' days. On a recent 'Roald Dahl' day, for example, pupils learned a lot about many of the characters and stories in this author's books. The school offers a wide range of well-attended art, cookery, dance, music and sports activities which effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has played a useful role in supporting senior leaders. The Chair of the Governing Body noted that the local authority training she had received on taking up the role had been very helpful. It currently provides the school with 'light touch' support because pupils make good progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body holds leaders to account for the performance of the school. Governors receive accurate analyses of pupils' progress, which give them a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and enable them to compare its performance to that of other schools nationally. They have a deep insight into the quality of teaching. The governing body works well with senior staff to evaluate the school's performance and to set improvement priorities. Governors rigorously check safeguarding practice, and as a result, safeguarding procedures meet current legal requirements. They have an effective oversight of the management of finance and resources and ensure that the salary progression of staff is justified. They ensure that additional funding by the pupil premium is focused appropriately to improve the achievement of the particular pupils who are entitled to it. Consequently, any gap between these pupils' attainment and that of others closes quickly and governors understand this.

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	124085
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	402227

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	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Dakin
Headteacher	Janice Tarr
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2010
Telephone number	01889 505303
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Email address	office@fulford.staffs.sch.uk

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