

Hazel Slade Community Primary School

Cannock Wood Street, Hazel Slade, Cannock, WS12 5PN

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as good as in reading.
- Teachers sometimes give pupils work which is too hard or too easy.
- The new marking policy is not applied consistently in all subjects. Pupils do not always know what they have done well or how to improve, particularly in writing in subjects other than English.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to choose how to research and investigate topics for themselves.
- Subject leaders have not fully developed skills to check on pupils' learning and progress in their subjects and arrange support where necessary.
- The governing body has not ensured that pupils make good progress in all subjects and that teaching is less variable.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are developing good skills and confidence in learning to read, because of recent improvements in teaching.
- The new headteacher has a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. She is already improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children get a good start to their education.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now in line with the average national attendance.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and pupils play and work together happily.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe and cared for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all four classes. In total, six lessons were observed during the inspection, of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. Short observations were also made of a series of reading lessons on the relationship between letters and sounds.
- Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, the headteacher, teaching staff and pupils. In addition, the inspector observed an assembly and listened to some pupils read.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including the school's tracking of pupils' progress, and documents relating to spending the money received for the pupil premium. A range of pupils' workbooks, safeguarding paperwork and the school's self-evaluation was also scrutinised.
- The views of 18 parents and carers were taken into account, as recorded in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also through letters to the inspector. A staff questionnaire was undertaken and responses taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Sheelagh Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hazel Slade is smaller than the average primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils that speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for looked-after children, those from Forces families and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is higher than average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs 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 also above average.
- More pupils than usual join the school part-way through the school year.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. All other pupils are taught in three other mixed age classes.
- A new headteacher took up her post at the start of the summer term; before that, an acting headteacher had been in post for one term.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body has been in post for a year.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring that teachers give pupils work which is not too easy or too hard for them, particularly in mathematics
 - applying the marking policy consistently in all subjects so that pupils know what they have done well and what to do next to improve their work further, particularly in writing
 - ensuring that teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for researching and investigating information across all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders check on pupils' achievement in their subjects and arrange support for individuals if they are falling behind
 - ensuring that the governing body checks that the same rigorous approach is taken to improving teaching and learning in mathematics as was taken to improve reading.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start in the Reception class with skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress. By the time they start in Year 1, children have usually achieved the skills expected for that age in all areas of learning.
- Over recent years, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1 has required improvement. The good rate of progress made in the Early Years Foundation Stage has not been maintained and standards have been broadly average by the end of Year 2. Standards are now starting to improve because of the new headteacher's focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- Pupils' progress in learning about letters and the sounds they make is now good in Years 1 and 2. This has helped them to make good progress in reading. As one Year 1 pupil accurately said, 'I am a very good reader you know!' Progress in reading has been variable in Years 3 to 6 over recent years. It is improving in reading.
- Pupils' progress in writing is helped by the new approach to teaching letters and the sounds they make. However, inconsistent marking in subjects other than English prevents pupils from making as much progress as they could in writing.
- Progress in mathematics requires improvement throughout the school. For some pupils in Key Stage 2, progress in the past has been inadequate. This was because teachers did not teach some aspects of the subject, such as the application of pupils' mathematical skills to new problems, carefully or regularly enough. A more structured programme for teaching and learning in mathematics has been introduced and pupils are now starting to make better progress than before.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. This is the same for those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. Those who find learning more difficult are catching up due to the support given. The gap in attainment between them and the other pupils is starting to close. Pupils who start school part-way through a year or key stage are helped to settle quickly. They are given additional support if necessary, and make progress in line with their friends.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is sometimes planned to suit pupils at different stages of learning. However, in some lessons this match is not precise enough as the work is too easy for some pupils and too hard for others. This means that while pupils mostly make adequate progress, too many do not make as much progress as they could.
- The teaching of the relationship between letters and sounds has been reviewed and improved. It is now consistent and methodical. As a result, pupils throughout the school are making more rapid progress than previously. Achievement in reading is now usually good.
- Teachers try hard to stimulate pupils' interest in writing. For example, in a lesson on poetry writing for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher used the frosty, misty view outside the window as a stimulus. Pupils were keen to write down their thoughts. However, this is rather variable.

- Teaching assistants are well trained in how to support individuals and groups in lessons. Their good quality work enables the pupils they support to make good progress in learning to read using the links between letters and sounds.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. Work is planned that takes good account of the needs and interests of young children. Lessons are lively and children are given good help and learn well from a wide range of practical and enjoyable activities.
- The school's marking policy has been reviewed, but it is not yet consistently used in all subjects. Where teachers mark pupils' work effectively, it helps them understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. When pupils write in subjects other than English, however, teachers' marking does not always provide enough information to help them improve their writing skills.
- Until fairly recently, lessons included too much of the teacher talking at the front of the class. This has improved and pupils are beginning to have more opportunity to research information in books and on the computer, and to use dictionaries and other reference books. However, these are not automatic parts of each lesson. As a result, pupils do not make swift enough progress in developing the skills for learning independently that will help them at secondary school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour around school and in lessons is typically good. Pupils are keen to learn and concentrate well in lessons, with very few exceptions. Pupils see the small size of the school as a bonus. They say 'We all get along, no-one is left out and in class we all work together.'
- Pupils are confident that behaviour is 'mostly good'. They think that the new system for managing behaviour, which involves coloured warning cards, is fair and effective. They say that there is virtually no bullying, although they do 'fall out' on occasion.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying and how to avoid it. They talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe, including how to avoid bullying through the internet and mobile phones.
- Those parents and carers who expressed an opinion were emphatic that behaviour is good and that their children feel safe and cared for. This opinion is shared by those staff who completed an inspection questionnaire. Pupils say that one of the best things about the school is that 'Teachers really care for you, especially when you feel ill.'
- The work that the school has done to improve pupils' attendance has been effective, and absence is now usually only when pupils are unwell. Even then, some pupils are reluctant to stay away as they enjoy school.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons. Little time is wasted when they move to different rooms for group work or at the end of playtimes and lunch.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's assessment of its strengths and weaknesses is accurate. The most important aspects for improvement are being tackled systematically by the new headteacher, who has focused immediately on improving standards.
- An initial priority has been improving attendance. This was a weakness identified in the previous inspection that had not been well enough tackled. The work towards this has been effective, and attendance has improved to be in line with the national average.
- A second priority has been to improve teaching and learning across all subjects throughout the school. This has already improved pupils' progress and standards in reading. Writing is also showing improvement although the rate of progress is held back by inconsistent marking.
- The school correctly identified that pupils did not achieve well enough in mathematics, and that it was an area for improvement. Work has already started to improve it by the introduction of new mathematics text books to help both teaching and learning. Further training and development in teaching and learning in mathematics are due to start in January 2013.
- The school has invested heavily in training to improve teachers' skills, particularly in the teaching of reading. Four times as much training has taken place in the past year as in the previous year. However, subject leaders are still undergoing training and developing their skills in checking on the progress pupils make in their subject across the whole school.
- Subject leaders review work in pupils' books and track their progress using the school assessment system. However, they do not regularly observe lessons or arrange support when pupils' progress slows, as this is still undertaken by the headteacher.
- The local authority has provided a good level of support for the new headteacher and the school. This has taken the form of advice and training for staff and the governing body, which is already starting to have an impact on improving teaching and pupils' progress.
- Safeguarding systems meet requirements and the level of care provided for all pupils is good. Pupils who start in school at times other than the normal start of the school year are warmly welcomed. They are fully involved in activities by other pupils and staff, and are quickly made to feel part of the school. As a result, they settle quickly and make progress in line with their peers.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved over the past year, due to the efficient work of the new headteacher and the new Chair of the Governing Body. Previously, the governing body had not ensured that school improvement was tackled well enough. The weaknesses identified by the previous inspection were not seen to quickly or carefully enough. However, governors have recently started to develop the necessary skills and practices to check on the work of the school and drive it forward. This is helped by the good level of training given by the local authority and the support of the new headteacher. These new working practices, though, are not yet an automatic part of the governing body's work. Nevertheless, the governing body is beginning to be more effective in checking the school's work and pupils' achievement. Its understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement is much improved, and it now provides better challenge and support for the senior leaders. The performance of teaching is evaluated with an emphasis on the progress pupils make, and is linked to progression in teachers' pay. The governing body also has a better appreciation of the recent work undertaken by the headteacher to improve aspects of the school, such as attendance, teaching and pupils' achievement. With appropriate support and information, it is beginning to

check on the impact of this work. For example, the governing body now checks whether the extra support provided for pupils who attract the pupil premium, such as the homework club, is resulting in their improved achievement.

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	124069
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	406210

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	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christie Jones
Headteacher	Louise Brealey
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2011
Telephone number	01543 512215
Fax number	01543 512215
Email address	headteacher@hazelslade.staffs.sch.uk

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