

St John's CofE (C) Primary School

Weston Road, Stafford, ST16 3RL

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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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 achieve well, particularly in English. Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 is higher than national average and lesson observations at Key Stage 2 across the school showed pupils making good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those that have special educational needs make good progress because of the expert help they receive.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers usually plan active tasks so that pupils enjoy learning and develop independence.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Parents speak very highly of the way their children are taught.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils across the school behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and respectful to each other and adults.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that any issues are dealt with quickly by the school. They are aware of the school's anti-bullying policy.
- The headteacher, well supported by governors, provides clear and effective leadership. This is helping improve progress for pupils.
- The school has worked hard to achieve the impressive improvements in reading across all year groups.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- When teachers mark pupils' work they do not always give them clear enough guidance on how to reach their targets and to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- In some lessons teachers miss opportunities to help pupils make further progress once they show understanding.
- Although the range of subjects is good, pupils are not given enough opportunities to learn about the lives of people from other cultures.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons and made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Four of the lesson observations were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, governors, a representative of the local authority and staff, including some teachers with leadership roles. Informal discussions were held with groups of parents and carers.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, information about students’ progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of pupils’ work.
- The views of twenty four parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and three letters were taken into account, along with twenty responses to the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Harkireet Sohel, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Davis	Additional Inspector
Patrick Walsh	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. All are educated on-site.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is slightly below average, the largest group being from the Ghurkha families based at the nearby army garrison.
- The proportion of pupils known to be 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 pupils with a parent in the armed forces serving overseas, is below average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school part way through their education.
- The school's Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of two Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress.
- Childcare provision before and after school is provided on site. This is privately managed and is inspected and reported upon separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - setting pupils challenging long-term targets and providing them with a clear understanding of what is required to attain the higher levels
 - consistently providing clear written feedback on pupils' work to enable them to take responsibility for their own progress, and to reach or exceed their targets
 - sharing existing best practice in teaching to ensure that teachers always plan to enable learning to proceed at a fast pace, and that all pupils are appropriately challenged and enabled to make further progress with their learning once they show understanding.
- Ensure the range of subjects promotes pupils' understanding of their role in the national and international community.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter Reception with skills and understanding that are typically in line with expectations for their age. In 2012, children did enter with levels below expectation, but inspection evidence shows that they make good progress and have caught up so that they are now working at expected levels.
- Good progress in Reception continues throughout Key Stage 1 and pupils attain above average levels. In 2012, due to inconsistencies in teaching experienced in Year 5, pupils reached the end of Key Stage 2 with levels only in line with national averages. Leaders' tracking of progress records show that other year groups consistently made good progress. Inspection evidence showed this to now be the case across all year groups as the result of leaders' quick action to address underachievement. Inspectors observed pupils across Key Stage 2 making good progress. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach above average levels.
- Both reading and phonics (learning of the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent) are embedded across the school, leading to strong progress in English. Pupils achieved high scores in the 2012 Phonics screening test which checks whether pupils' understanding of letters and sounds they make are at the expected level at the end of Year 1. Whilst progress is not as strong in mathematics, recent strategies are having an impact. A good example was in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils thoroughly enjoyed activities around pricing ingredients which were appropriate to their lives. Pupils from across the school told the inspectors that they enjoy the subject.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English, receive additional help and guidance that are tailored to their individual needs. The programme to support the weaker readers is particularly effective in establishing good learning skills. As a result of this support they make good progress and their attainment is similar to that of others.
- The school provides very well for pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those from Gurkha heritage. The additional funding is spent on extra staff to enable these pupils to receive individual and small group support to promote literacy and numeracy skills. In 2012, this group made better progress than similar pupils nationally and than their peers.
- Pupils are keen to do well. In the best lessons they develop independence and take responsibility for their own progress. In a Year 2 Literacy lesson, excellent questioning by the teacher encouraged pupils to discover for themselves exciting words to use in a poem about 'Space'.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated and there is a strong and consistent high proportion of lessons that are well planned by teams of teachers.
- Leaders' regular checks and the lessons observed by inspectors show that although teaching is typically good, a small amount requires improvement. The best teachers use questioning skilfully and encourage independence. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to allow all pupils

to move on with their learning once they show understanding.

- Most teaching conveys high expectations and a range of tasks that help pupils produce high quality responses. Pupils say that they like the way teachers help them try more difficult things in lessons. A Year 5 lesson in Literacy, for example, allowed pupils to define adverbs through effective use of resources.
- Resources are well prepared and regularly keep the pupils interested in the learning. A Year 5 English lesson used a short, silent video clip of a dominoes demonstration which generated excitement and curiosity.
- Teaching assistants provide good in-class support to those who need extra help especially those who are disabled or have special educational needs. The intensive support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is particularly successful through the use of short tasks.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enjoy a blend of tasks that support what they know and also encourage them to try new things. They are also encouraged to explain what they have done and why in front of other children so developing their self-confidence.
- Marking is regular and consistent across the school and pupils are fully aware of their short term targets. However, opportunities were missed to provide pupils with a clear understanding of their long term National Curriculum targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Inspectors were impressed by the good standard of behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils are kind, supportive of each other and display very positive attitudes to their learning.
- The school is a friendly and welcoming environment. It is a well organised and safe place to be in and this view is supported by parents and carers, pupils and staff.
- Staff in the school closely check behaviour and record any incidents carefully. Pupils say that any instances of negative behaviour are always dealt with quickly by teachers. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to be safe. They are very aware of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and racism and how to deal with it.
- Attendance is above average in comparison to schools nationally and this has helped the school improve the progress of more pupils. The school works closely with families so that they can maintain this high standard.
- Relationships are a strength of the school. A Key Stage 1 assembly led by the local rector skilfully reinforced the values of kindness and humility with role play and music.
- The school provides opportunities for pupils to show responsibility through activities such as playground buddies, the school council and reading buddies.
- The range of subjects provided promotes pupils' personal development well although they are not given enough opportunities to learn about the lives of people from other cultures.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has been robust in his determination to improve the quality of teaching at the school. Staff say that they are well supported by leaders at all levels.
 - Teachers, whose practice is not yet good, are supported and given appropriate training. Those who are good are supported in further improvement. The school has a clear policy to ensure that pay rises and promotion are used effectively to reward good performance.
 - Since the last inspection, inadequate teaching has been eradicated, and teachers are consistently held to account so that more pupils are making good progress across the school. The staff now follow a comprehensive plan for their continued professional development.
 - The school fosters good relationships with parents and carers. This is particularly strong in the Early Years Foundation Stage. For example, parents and carers are given regular updates on their child's progress and given advice on weekend family activities to support learning.
 - Subject leaders provide good support for their staff teams. They promote achievement in their subjects and provide appropriate training for staff. There is therefore a high degree of common practice across the school.
 - The school has good links with other schools and the local authority provides support and opportunities for sharing best practice. The link with the local church is strong and provides effective moral and spiritual learning for pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors are well informed and support school leaders effectively whilst holding them to account. They take an active role in the school including providing support for pupils reading and supporting the senior leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching. They question the headteacher about how good teachers are rewarded and how any underperformance is tackled. They use the data provided to them to monitor pupils' academic achievement on a regular basis. They are fully aware of the principles behind the pupil premium and systematically check its impact on pupil progress. They are involved with school leaders in the management of the performance of all staff. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

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	124297
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	406231

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	365
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Blake
Headteacher	David Rowley
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2011
Telephone number	01785 251960
Fax number	01785 225095
Email address	headteacher@st-johns-stafford.staffs.sch.uk

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