

Whitchurch CofE Junior School

Salisbury Road, Whitchurch, SY13 1RX

Inspection dates 23–24 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 are making good progress throughout the school across a range of subjects.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is predominantly good. Lessons are interesting and make pupils work hard.
- Pupils behave well and try hard in lessons. They are keen to take part in all the activities. They work well either together in groups or by themselves.
- Leaders and managers are relentless in their pursuit of high standards. Pupils' progress is checked carefully and expectations of pupils and staff are high.
- The curriculum is imaginative and provides a wide range of experiences for pupils. The new themed approach is helping pupils to understand their work more fully.
- Pupils quickly learn the skills they need to read with confidence. They enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the variety of books they read.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still some teaching that requires improvement.
- Work in books and the quality of marking are not of a consistently high standard in all classes.
- The role of governors in challenging academic performance is not fully established.
- Some pupils eligible for extra funding are not yet achieving expected levels by the time they leave the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, visiting 22 lessons or parts of lessons.
- Discussions were held with pupils, the headteacher and other leaders and managers, representatives of the governing body and of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's development plan, minutes of the governing body meetings and safeguarding arrangements. They also looked at pupils' work in books.
- A number of parents and carers were asked for their views at the beginning and end of the school day, and the views of 28 parents and carers who responded to the Parent View survey were analysed.

Inspection team

Simon Griffiths, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Woodall	Additional Inspector
Kerin Jones	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also small.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are slightly higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding) is above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- No pupils are taught in alternative provision away from the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good and an increasing proportion outstanding by:
 - using assessment information to plan lessons which challenge all groups of pupils
 - improving teachers' questioning skills to deepen pupils' understanding
 - ensuring the monitoring of teaching focuses specifically on the learning gains made by pupils of different ability levels within lessons.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of what it is they need to improve by:
 - ensuring high-quality marking is applied consistently in all classes and in all subjects
 - making sure pupils understand and consider the feedback
 - requiring pupils to act on and respond to comments so feedback becomes part of a cycle of improvement.
- Increase the level of challenge by governors to senior leaders on the performance of pupils in English and mathematics by:
 - using the available pupil data to identify where pupils' performance could be improved
 - checking the standards reached by all groups of pupils including those for whom the school receives the pupil premium.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' standards when they enter the school in Year 3 are just below the national average, a little lower for pupils who joined in 2009, slightly higher for those who joined in 2012. Over the last three years, pupils have left the school at the end of Year 6 with broadly average standards, although there was a dip in English in 2012. School data indicate that many of the pupils who left in 2012 made expected progress and some groups made more than the expected progress.
- Standards in the school are now rising and progress is quickening. Progress in lessons and work seen in most of the books show that pupils across the school are making good progress. The rate of progress quickens as pupils make their way throughout the school. Many of the pupils are able to explain their levels and what they need to do next.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised. In lessons, pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, work hard and rise to the challenge which teachers set them.
- Pupils with lower than expected reading levels have the skills to match letters and sounds and break down more difficult words. They have regular opportunities to read in a calm and quiet atmosphere and enjoy doing so. Many of the older pupils are reading long stories and talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors.
- Pupils produce good work across a range of subjects. They understand how subjects fit together as a result of the new lesson themes. They are confident in using computers.
- Pupils work well as a whole class, in small groups, and individually and enjoy sharing their learning with other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from a range of carefully planned support which often enables them to make good progress. The school ensures that their confidence is high and this is a key reason for the improved progress.
- The very few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English are supported well by teaching assistants during lessons. They benefit from the good behaviour and calm atmosphere.
- The school has used additional funds to provide extra support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium. In previous years, the gap between their performance and that of other pupils has been too wide, but that gap is narrowing very quickly.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils in the school are now making good progress because the teaching has improved. The majority of it is good and some is outstanding. There is still a small amount of teaching which requires improvement. Key strengths are good relationships between teachers and pupils, and calm, purposeful classrooms.
- Teachers work hard to make their lessons enjoyable. Activities are often based on real-life problems. In one lesson seen, pupils were improving their mathematical skills by working out journey times for ferry boats based on real timetables. They were pleased when the work became increasingly difficult. Pupils want to learn and relish the challenge. Good use is made of resources to interest and inspire the pupils.
- The school's philosophy is that the higher levels of work planned for the pupils must be available to all of the pupils, including the less able. These pupils are supported well by other adults and this contributes to a feeling of the whole class learning together. More-able pupils also make good progress in the best lessons where teachers have planned extra activities to challenge them.
- Where the teaching is less effective, this is because the level of challenge to all groups of pupils is not as well planned or clear. Consequently, more-able pupils are capable of achieving more. In these lessons, pace is slower and questioning is less effective in deepening pupils' understanding.

- The school has good systems to track the progress of all pupils and, in the best lessons, the information is used well to ensure learning is at the right level. In the few lessons requiring improvement this information is not used to ensure a sufficient level of challenge for all pupils.
- The school has developed its use of checklists in the pupils' books which they can use to make sure they are learning and understanding the main points. These help the pupils make sure they complete the steps needed to achieve success and support them along the way. They are also helpful in ensuring pupils take responsibility for their own work.
- Marking is often of a high quality. Pupils read the comments and many either initial them to show they have read them or even write a short reply. This good practice is not consistent across the whole school and in a few books marking is sketchy, unhelpful and difficult to read.
- Overall, teachers are skilled at questioning the pupils to develop their understanding. They know their pupils well and ask questions which will stretch them. In some lessons, teachers do not build on the answers given by pupils by asking more searching questions or seeking better explanations.
- Teaching in subjects other than mathematics and English is also good. In one lesson, pupils were creating moving pictures on the computers and were clearly enjoying the learning and finding it exciting. The teacher's good subject knowledge and rapid, clear teaching equipped the pupils with the skills needed to succeed well. Pupils were expected to work independently and they were able to do so.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and are highly skilled in meeting the needs of individual pupils. They share information on how well the pupils are doing and plan support for each week.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are good**

- A main reason why pupils make good progress is their enthusiasm for learning. They respond well to questions, take part in all activities and work well both in groups and by themselves. They enjoy challenging tasks. They try to work things out for themselves but also know they will be helped by the teacher if needed.
- Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe, including using the internet. They say they feel safe and well looked after in school. They understand what bullying is and say there is very little. A few parents did mention bullying when asked but also said that problems were sorted out. Pupils were very clear on what is unacceptable language or phrases.
- The focus on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in interesting lessons which engage pupils and hold their attention. There are few instances even of minor interruptions. When they do occur it is because the teaching lacks pace and a sense of urgency.
- Attendance is higher than average and is consistently improving, although it has dipped in recent weeks. Pupils understand the importance of coming to school on time.
- The well-being of pupils is a high priority in the school. Good pastoral support from learning mentors and all staff encourages good behaviour and self-confidence. Any difficult behaviour is rare but is managed well and learning is not interrupted.
- Pupils have additional responsibilities, for example, playground buddies help pupils to mix well together at playtime and ensure that no one is left out.

The leadership and management**are good**

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have built on the changes made at the time of the last inspection. They say it is a different school and this is shown by the improved quality of learning and personal development now taking place.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear determination to raise standards in all aspects of the school's work and have been successful in doing so. This is evidenced in the improving teaching and progress.
- Leaders have a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and there are

detailed plans in place for further improvements. These improvements are nearly always based on improving the quality of teaching.

- The tracking of pupils' progress is detailed. Progress is analysed carefully at an individual level but also the performance of different groups of pupils is checked to provide information on how the school can improve further.
- The extra funding for eligible pupils has been carefully allocated by governors and leaders to provide extra support in small groups as well as individual support. This has had a positive impact.
- The curriculum has been redeveloped to provide rich experiences for the pupils. A striking example is an entrance hall display of pupil's work modelling the contour lines of hills using different materials. Pupils' books show a wide range of activities which are often presented with care and imagination.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of after-school clubs and visits, including sports, cookery and media clubs. Pupils and parents value these and would like to see more. Pupils all say they enjoy school.
- The local authority has provided light-touch support as it recognises the school's own strong capacity for improvement.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and organised well. The school involves parents well and there is good liaison with partners and external agencies. There are strong links with partner schools to ensure the move to secondary school is a smooth one. The teacher in charge is well informed and has a good overview of pupils' needs, activities and progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors carry out their statutory roles and seek training to strengthen their roles. They ensure the school is financially sound through close monitoring of the finances. They allocate resources, including the grant for pupil premium funding, carefully and check how effectively funding has been used. Governors look at the data that is available but do not always use it to find out how different groups of pupils, such as those for whom the school receives the pupil premium, are doing compared to those in all schools. Governors are aware of the link between salary progression and pupils' 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	123514
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	406169

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Rylands
Headteacher	Diana West
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2011
Telephone number	01948 662255
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