

St Luke's CofE (C) Primary School

Pepper Street, Silverdale, Newcastle, ST5 6QJ

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2013

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.

- Good leadership has contributed strongly to the school's improvement. As a result, teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well, whatever their starting points.
- Pupils' progress is best in reading, because early reading skills are well taught and those who fall behind are helped to catch up quickly.
- Teachers cope well with the challenge of classes of mixed age and ability. They provide lively and interesting lessons and a wide range of activities after school and at lunchtime.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning. They feel safe in school and understand how to stay safe in a variety of situations when out and about.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well cared for. They are fully included in school life and achieve well.
- Parents and carers have a high level of confidence in the school and are pleased with what it offers.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length, and some pupils do not spell accurately enough.
- Marking in mathematics does not always give pupils enough information about progress against their targets or the next steps they should take to improve their work.
- Occasionally, the work in lessons is too easy for more-able pupils.
- Leaders do not always measure the impact of new initiatives well enough, or use performance information to hold teachers fully to account for pupils' achievement.
- Attendance levels have fallen this year.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited eight lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- He held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, teachers, two governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, and policies aimed at keeping pupils safe.
- The views of 16 parents and carers were analysed through the Parent View website. The inspector also spoke informally to parents and carers to seek their views about the school.
- The views expressed by 12 staff who returned a questionnaire were considered.

Inspection team

Keith Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Numbers are increasing, however, and there are over 20 more pupils than at the time of the last inspection
- There are four classes, each with pupils of more than one age group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is well above average.
- About half of the pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for particular groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. This is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is similar to that found in most schools.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - increasing pupils' confidence and accuracy in spelling
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length
 - building on the work already started to provide more consistent challenge for more-able pupils
 - increasing pupils' understanding of their targets and next steps, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - evaluating more precisely the impact of initiatives and strategies
 - making more use of assessment information to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress
 - working more closely with parents to raise attendance levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Many children join the school with language and mathematical skills that are below those typical for this age. Whatever their starting points, pupils make good progress and by the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. The large proportion of pupils who transfer from other schools also make good progress, although their attainment is often lower than that of pupils who have been at the school longer. Pupils' progress is best in Years 5 and 6, where the teaching is regularly outstanding.
- Children in Reception make good progress in all areas of learning. They benefit from a good balance between activities they choose for themselves and working under the close guidance of an adult. Staff keep a close check on their progress and record the results in attractive and informative 'learning journeys' that are readily accessible to parents and carers. This system of recording pupils' achievements continues through the school.
- Children make a good start in learning to read in Reception, and they build upon their skills well in Years 1 and 2. Improvements in the teaching of reading mean that all pupils in Year 2 are on track to reach or exceed the expected Level 2 this year. Across the school, programmes to help pupils catch up if they fall behind in their reading are very effective. Many pupils read widely for pleasure and to help their learning.
- Pupils' writing is also improving, but not as much as their reading. Successful steps are being taken to improve spelling, for example, but some pupils do not yet have the knowledge and confidence to spell accurately when they write independently. While there are now more opportunities for pupils to write at length, this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics rose last year, although pupils do not always know precisely enough their next steps in learning or how they can reach their targets. This is because teachers' marking in mathematics is not as detailed as it is in English.
- Staff have worked successfully to improve the progress made by those supported by the pupil premium. Test results, the school's records and the work in pupils' books show that the gap between the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils is closing. The funding is used well to tailor support to their specific learning and emotional needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because they are fully included by staff and pupils alike and have very specific extra support to enable them to make good progress. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well.

The quality of teaching is good

- The proportion of good or better teaching has risen because staff have identified and tackled what needed to improve. This has contributed strongly to the improving picture in pupils' learning. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is highly successful, briskly paced and challenging. Reading is taught well across the school.
- A key improvement has been in the planning of pupils' work, which was identified as an area of weakness in the last inspection. Teachers have high expectations and are more skilled at tailoring the work to different abilities and ages so that usually, although not always, pupils are

given the right amount of challenge or support.

- Lessons run smoothly because pupils find the work interesting and are keen to do well. The few pupils who find it hard to behave well are managed ably, so that disruption to learning is minimal.
- Teachers use a range of successful strategies, including asking searching questions, to keep a check on how well pupils are learning. They use this information well to identify and correct misunderstandings, prompt deeper thinking and review what has been learned so far.
- Marking has improved, particularly in English, where pupils are given detailed information about how well they have done and how they can improve. Pupils understand why they have targets, but are not always clear about how they can achieve them or the next steps in their learning, particularly in mathematics. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the National Curriculum level they are aiming for and what they need to do to reach it.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and speak highly of a wide range of subjects and the themed approach used to make their learning interesting. Attendance rose last year and was above average, although this year attendance levels have slipped again.
- Across the school, pupils behave well and relationships are good, and this helps lessons to run smoothly. Systems to reward and encourage good behaviour, and the sanctions used when pupils misbehave, are applied consistently by staff. They are clearly understood by pupils and strongly supported by parents and carers, who raised no concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils who are new to the school say the other pupils and staff are friendly and helpful, and this enables them to settle in quickly. The school's approach to helping all pupils to have an equal chance to succeed is also a key factor in why disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enjoy school and achieve well.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school, and this is echoed by all of the parents and carers who took part in the consultation. Pupils learn about, and discuss confidently, how to stay safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet.
- Pupils, and their parents and carers, say that bullying is extremely rare. They are confident that, should such a situation arise, staff would deal with it swiftly and effectively. Activities such as 'anti-bullying week' help prepare pupils to deal with the different types of bullying they might encounter in the future.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, well supported by the assistant headteacher, governors and staff, provides strong leadership that is firmly focused on improving teaching and learning. All parents and carers who offered an opinion agree that the school is led and managed well.
- The school's thorough systems for checking its work identify the right areas for improvement, and they are tackled systematically. The way that assessment information is used to plan work has improved. Although this information is beginning to be used to hold teachers to account for

pupils' progress, this is not yet firmly established. The local authority has supported the school well in its drive to improve teaching and learning.

- The school uses a range of programmes and strategies to give extra help to those who need it. The success of these initiatives is reviewed in general terms, but the impact not always measured precisely enough to check that pupils are receiving the full benefit, or to modify the approach when it is next used.
 - Parents and carers are positive about the school, which works closely with them to promote good behaviour, tackle unacceptable behaviour and support those whose children are disabled or have special educational needs. It has been less successful in working with them to maintain the rise in attendance levels seen last year.
 - The school provides a broad and interesting range of lessons and out-of-school activities. Good use is made of outside expertise, for example through regular specialist contributions to sports, dance, music and modern languages. There is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development and preparing them for the future. Pupils have a good understanding of a range of religions and cultures.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Many members of the governing body are new to the role. Focused training, better information from senior leaders and opportunities for governors to find out for themselves mean that they are increasingly able to challenge leaders about the school's performance. They understand what is working well and what needs to improve, and so have a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning. Appropriate links are made between the performance of teachers, staff training and their salary, and governors ensure that there are effective systems to support staff who are new to teaching. Governors are well involved in making financial decisions and checking, for example, that the pupil premium funding is having the expected impact on the achievement of eligible pupils. They ensure that funds are used very well to provide extra support for these pupils and extend the skills of staff who work with them. The governing body ensures that the systems to keep pupils safe meet national requirements, and are checked thoroughly and regularly.
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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	124267
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	406227

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	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Phillips
Headteacher	Sam Ray
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2011
Telephone number	01782 297445
Fax number	01782 297446
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