

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffordshire, ST3 7DF

Inspection dates 29–30 January 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.

- Many children start school with skills and knowledge well below those generally expected for their age. From low starting points they make good progress in their learning.
- As a result of good teaching throughout the school, and outstanding teaching in some year groups, standards in mathematics and English are in line with the national average by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are particularly well supported by staff in lessons and make good progress.
- The school makes sure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn; it uses the extra funding it receives for those eligible for free school meals wisely.
- Good teaching results in pupils making speedy progress in the majority of classes.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school; they are polite and courteous to each other and to their teachers.
- Pupils value the role played by peer mediators who have helped to improve behaviour, contributing well to their feeling safe in school.
- Senior leaders and governors have improved pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching well since the previous inspection. They share a strong desire to settle for nothing less than the best for all pupils.
- School leaders robustly hold senior leaders to account for school improvement and manage the performance of staff productively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The rate of progress in learning made by pupils is not as fast in some classes as in others.
- A small amount of teaching does not meet the learning needs of all the pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or part lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. In addition, the inspectors listened to pupils read and observed teaching assistants working with pupils.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils, with the Chair of the Governing Body and with teachers. An interview was conducted with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector held brief discussions with parents at the end of the school day. Inspectors considered the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the most recent responses from school questionnaires circulated to all parents. Information from 18 staff questionnaires was also considered as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's plans for improvement as well as documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- A broad range of other evidence was also scrutinised by inspectors including pupils' current work in books and the school's own data and monitoring records of how well pupils progress in their learning, particularly for the Year 6 pupils who were on a residential visit and not in school during the inspection.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium which provides additional government funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- A slightly above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is about the national average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is slightly above average and increasing.
- 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?

- Maximise the rates of progress made by all pupils in their learning by:
 - increasing the impact of recently appointed subject leaders
 - ensuring all teachers exploit fully the creative learning opportunities afforded by the newly developed curriculum
 - sharing the existing outstanding practice between all staff
 - increasing the independence of all pupils as learners.
- Eradicate teaching which is not fully meeting the needs of all pupils in lessons by:
 - further refining how teachers assess and respond to the learning of individual pupils
 - ensuring learning tasks are matched very precisely to pupils' needs
 - substantially increasing the amount of more difficult work given to pupils who are more able.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding the progress expected of them whilst in Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics is above the national average. It is much higher in English than in mathematics.
- Attainment has improved since the previous inspection because most teachers use information about pupils' precise levels of ability to plan for their specific learning needs. This is particularly the case in Year 2 and Year 6. In these year groups the progress made by pupils accelerates rapidly because of exceedingly effective teaching. However, on occasions, lessons do not meet the needs of all pupils, especially the most able, who sometimes do not get work that is hard enough for them.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium are currently making rapid progress in their reading and writing. They are matching or exceeding the progress made by all pupils. This is because their specific needs are being well met by the school through the careful use of the funding.
- Although Year 6 pupils were not in school during the inspection their books show that they make at least good, and in some cases outstanding, progress. This contrasts with pupils in Year 1 and in lower Key Stage 2 whose progress sometimes slows when work is not well matched to their learning needs.
- After joining school from low starting points children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they benefit from well-designed development opportunities in a stimulating learning environment. During the inspection children enjoyed finding out about forming the letter 'j' using their fingers in flour. Because learning was fun, they made good progress in understanding letter shapes and letter names by the end of the session.
- All pupils read well. Many of those who join the school at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make rapid progress in reading and speak enthusiastically about how the school has helped them to improve.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well catered for. The school closely watches their progress and is committed to ensuring they have the same opportunities as others. During lessons they make rapid progress in their learning because of the very caring and supportive teaching by teaching assistants. Small-group work for pupils outside the classroom is successfully targeted at supporting those with very specific learning needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good and some outstanding teaching secures good achievement for all pupils. The majority of teachers meet the individual learning needs of all pupils well. In lessons where the quality of teaching is particularly strong, teachers skilfully increase the rate of learning when they recognise that pupils have grasped a concept or improved their understanding in literacy and numeracy. Not all teaching follows this very effective practice.
- Teaching assistants support learning effectively and improve all pupils' learning well. In many classes teaching assistants work successfully with teachers and the whole class to promote rapid learning, particularly in literacy.
- In outstanding lessons, teachers plan very carefully to improve pupils' understanding exceptionally rapidly, such as in a Year 5 lesson where the teacher matched the learning task precisely to the pupils' ability levels. Some of the work asked of the pupils challenged them to think at a very high level about how they could systematically solve a mathematical challenge.
- In the more effective lessons, teachers use questioning well to gain a valuable insight into how effectively their teaching is helping pupils to increase their learning. This type of questioning was observed working exceptionally well when a teacher probed younger pupils' understanding of joining two adjectives together in a sentence. The pupils responded well and their understanding of how to use adjectives took a good step forward.

- Pupils' books show that they take a pride in their work and many teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve.
- In many lessons, the rate of learning is fast because teachers plan well to meet the needs for pupils and extend their learning. However, planning to meet the precise needs of all pupils is not consistent throughout all classes, and this sometimes results in work being too easy, especially for the more-able pupils.
- In a few lessons the pace of learning slows because tasks are over-directed and pupils are not allowed to flourish as independent learners.
- The environment for learning in school is rich and pupils have many opportunities to learn through creative and exceptionally engaging activities very well matched to their interests.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In many lessons, pupils explain they have a love of learning; this is particularly the case in writing. One pupil reported she was enjoying learning about how to empathise with the feelings of the wolf in '*Little Red Riding Hood*' because the teacher had given her the opportunity to consider emotions.
- Pupils behave well around school and in lessons. In the vast majority of lessons their attitudes to learning are good and they are willing participants in lessons. From time to time pupils report lessons can be disrupted by a few pupils who do not want to listen or learn, although these instances are said to be uncommon.
- Teachers are ably supported by teaching assistants in ensuring pupils behave and respond well to instructions during lessons. Pupils participate well in lessons which are stimulating and interest them. All pupils in Year 4 were highly motivated and participated successfully in a design project using art straws to construct towers and consider how they could increase the stability of the structures.
- Pupils report behaviour has improved on the playground at break times and lunch breaks. Pupils feel strongly that the peer-mediation programme, where pupils resolve difficulties which arise from time to time, has played an important part in this.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay safe on the internet. They agree the well-fenced perimeter is an important factor in their feeling safe in school. They report a few instances of bullying but agree these are resolved rapidly and to their satisfaction when they arise.
- Pupils are very aware of different types of bullying. They have been involved in a number of initiatives in school to improve behaviour. These have included writing a policy for anti-bullying in child-friendly language, which has reduced instances of bullying to a very small number.
- Pupils are very tolerant and supportive of each other in school. Particularly when pupils join the school from other countries. Pupils say, 'This is a lovely school and we enjoy learning here.'

The leadership and management are good

- The senior leaders have high expectations; they expect the highest quality teaching in every lesson. They monitor the quality of work carried out by pupils and how well teachers are teaching. They use this information well to bring about improvement.
- The revised, rich and diverse school curriculum is used well by many teachers to enhance pupils' learning through very creative and stimulating learning experiences. However, a few teachers have not yet fully incorporated all the benefits it offers to improve their teaching.
- Since the previous inspection the relentless focus of leaders, including governors, on securing improvement has resulted in improved achievement, although rates of pupils' progress is slower in some year groups than in others. Rightly, those charged with improving the school recognise this, and have begun to implement plans to secure the best achievement for all pupils. Recent moves of teachers between classes have been made to improve teaching and learning in specific year groups, such as Year 3.

- School leaders know who the best teachers are in school and recognise how important it is for them to share their knowledge of outstanding teaching with others. So far this has not happened effectively enough.
- Although the new members of staff leading literacy are keen and enthusiastic, their appointment to the role is recent and so they have not had time to make an impact on improving pupils' progress.
- The school has been well supported by the local authority resulting in many improvements since the previous inspection; one such improvement has been the more robust use of pupils' tracking data to secure rapid progress in learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body are very clear about the strengths of the school and that there are a few weaknesses remaining which prevent the school from being outstanding, such as variable achievement and some weaker teaching. Governors ensure that the pupil premium is spent wisely by the school. They know about the academic performance of pupils and how to compare the performance of their school to that of others. They focus well on holding school leaders to account for improvements. Members of the governing body manage the performance of the headteacher and all school staff well. Through this process they reward effective teachers and endeavour to support those who need to improve further.

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	124322
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	402253

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Woodward
Headteacher	Edward Byrne
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2010
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