

The Fountains Primary School

Bitham Lane, Stretton, Burton-on-Trent, DE13 0HB

Inspection dates 13–14 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.

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their very low starting points
- Pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties, and most pupils with moderate learning difficulties, make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder make outstanding progress, especially in communication and social interaction.
- Good teaching, particularly the consistent use of real objects, pictures, signing and symbols, helps pupils learn well. It holds their interest and helps them to understand and communicate.
- Behaviour is managed well and staff have excellent relationships with pupils. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Good leadership and management in the school and across the federation have improved the school well.
- The governing body, which is responsible for both schools in the federation, ensures resources are used well to promote pupils' achievement. It checks on the work of the school carefully.
- Good leadership and governance have greatly improved the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in a few lessons requires improvement and not enough is outstanding.
- Adults' skills are not always used well enough in class to support the learning of the least-able pupils.
- More-able pupils are not always challenged enough to think deeply, and are not always given feedback to tell them how well they have done and what they can do to improve further.
- Small gains in learning are not always recorded in lessons or used to help plan activities for pupils' next steps in learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all teachers teach in 13 lessons. The observations were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- An inspector heard pupils read, and looked at samples of pupils' work jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, three members of the governing body, a small number of parents, and staff. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 13 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and inspection questionnaire responses from staff.
- Joint meetings were held with some governors, the senior leadership team and the lead inspector of the high school, which was undergoing an inspection at the same time, to discuss the impact of the federation on the two schools.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at a range of documentation including the school improvement plan and summary of self-evaluation, safeguarding policies, incident logs and records of attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and the school's information on pupils' progress over time.

Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Woodall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Fountains primary school provides for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties (MLD and SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). A third of the school's populations have autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Most pupils are White British and a few speak English as an additional language. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a small number of children taught mostly in a mixed Reception and Key Stage 1 class. A very small number of children are taught in the Key Stage 1 class for pupils with ASD.
- Since September 2004 the school has been federated with a nearby secondary special school and a special nursery, managed jointly by health and education. The nursery has recently moved onto the same site as Fountains primary school but is subject to a separate inspection. The three establishments share the same executive headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body.
- The school provides outreach support for local schools. It does not use any other school or location to provide regular education for its pupils.
- The school has recently converted to a foundation school. It has taken on trust status in partnership with seven local primary schools and a secondary school. The governing body has been reconstituted accordingly.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and improve achievement by:
 - making better use of teaching assistants to help the least-able pupils learn well at all times
 - using questioning regularly in lessons to extend the thinking of more-able pupils
 - providing feedback in lessons to let more-able pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve
 - consistently recording the small gains in learning in lessons, and using this information to plan activities that are designed to extend learning further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children in the Early Years Foundation make good progress in all areas of learning from their very low starting points. They get off to a good start because staff work closely with parents and carers and each other to ensure children settle quickly. Good use of pictures, symbols and signing, and a range of well-chosen practical resources that are used well, helps children learn and develop their communication and social interaction skills.
- As they move through Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in reading. Reading is well taught by the method of linking letters with the sounds they make (phonics) and pupils are given the opportunity to read widely where possible. They make equally good progress in writing and mathematics because teachers match demanding work closely to pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils' progress in developing communication skills is good, and often outstanding. This is because the well-chosen methods for developing communication in the Early Years Foundation Stage are continued throughout the school. Pupils with ASD make outstanding progress in communication. The majority do better than expected nationally, taking their age and ability into account. One delighted parent described how her child moved quickly from being unable to communicate to speaking 'non-stop' at home.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be entitled to free school meals, make progress equal to their classmates. This is because the school uses the extra practical resources provided for them well, and also provides good additional learning support to meet their individual needs. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their classmates. The progress of the least-able pupils is sometimes limited by insufficient support in class.
- The school's accurate and detailed information about pupils' achievement over time shows that all pupils, including those with PMLD, SLD, MLD and ASD make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the work for the more-able pupils with MLD is sometimes not demanding enough to help them think deeply and make as much progress as possible.
- Partnership working across the federation is good. It has helped teachers to share progress information, check its accuracy and ensure levels of attainment are agreed as pupils transfer from the primary school to the secondary school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This is due to sharing information from lesson observations across the primary and secondary schools. Observations have become more rigorous and good practice is shared. As a result, most teaching is now good and some is outstanding.
- Staff plan a variety of interesting activities in lessons and make good use of resources to promote learning. A good example of this was seen in a Key Stage 1 class for pupils with ASD where all adults used electronic toys to develop pupils' understanding of cause and effect. Similarly, pupils with PMLD in a Key Stage 2 class were given good support to use a ball to create artwork and keyboards to create different sounds. They were helped to use the sensory room to operate switches and listen to music. The consistently good use of communication

aids and real life objects develops pupils' communication skills and increases their awareness of their surroundings effectively.

- Good use of laptop computers and the computerised whiteboard stimulate learning and enjoyment. This was seen, for example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage when children delighted in taking turns to play a construction game on the computer.
- Lessons are usually brisk and lively, and in the best lessons, teachers generate great enthusiasm for learning. Staff have excellent relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. As a result, pupils are well behaved and keen to learn. A good balance between learning activities chosen by children and those led by adults both indoors and outdoors stimulate children's curiosity and imagination in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress have greatly improved since the previous inspection. The information gained is generally used well to plan activities to help pupils think for themselves and learn well. However, occasionally, the small gains in learning in lessons are not recorded or used to help with this planning which can limit pupils' progress.
- Questioning to check whether pupils have learned, and feedback to individuals on how well they have done and how they can improve further, are usually good. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to extend the thinking of more-able pupils by using these approaches.
- Highly skilled teaching assistants generally provide good support for pupils' learning. Occasionally, though, their skills are not used well enough in lessons to support the least able. One example of this was observed in a mixed ability class where the teacher and teaching assistant worked with more-able and middle-ability pupils, while less-able pupils had minimal support to move their learning forward. Occasionally, there are not enough adults to make the most of all opportunities for learning, for example, while pupils with PMLD are waiting for therapy.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour and safety in lessons and around the school are good. Pupils are always encouraged to stay safe and use equipment safely, which they do. Those using wheel chairs and walking frames move safely around the classroom, and other pupils are considerate towards them.
- Pupils with more complex behaviours respond well to consistent management by adults. They make good progress in developing self-control. This is strongly supported by good use of individual teaching areas in the classrooms for pupils with ASD. The highly organised, predictable surroundings help these pupils to quickly settle to their work and reduce their anxieties.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and greatly enjoy their lessons. This is shown by their good attendance and keenness to participate in all school activities. On a few occasions when teaching is less motivating, pupils become distracted which slows their progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage stay safe and enjoy learning because staff carefully watch over and interact with them, both indoors and outside.
- Shared working with the federated secondary school has developed a consistent approach to improving pupils' behaviour and safety, and in providing support for families in both schools. It

has also supported the smooth transfer of pupils from the primary to the secondary school.

- Parents and carers believe that behaviour and safety are good and that bullying is rare. Pupils know what to do should there be any bullying. In discussions they said there was no bullying in school because everyone was kind to each other. The well-kept incident log shows that such incidents are very rare and dealt with effectively should they occur.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development. The executive head teacher and the leadership team share a strong drive for continuous improvement in both the federation and the learning trust. The schools are sharing and developing expertise, for example, in tracking pupils' progress. Staff are working effectively together to improve their skills in assessing pupils' work and levels of attainment.
 - Leaders have brought about good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Shared monitoring of teaching and learning across the primary and secondary schools has led to consistent and secure judgements on their quality. This forms a good basis for setting individual teachers targets for improvement, which are also closely and helpfully linked to the national standards for teaching. Arrangements for professional development are good and linked to improving pupils' achievement and well-being.
 - Joint planning meetings by subject leaders across the federation have led to the development of a more creative range of subjects and topics for pupils to learn from. Pupils benefit from interesting, practical experiences such as gardening and experience a range of visits and visitors to the school that supports their achievement and personal development very well.
 - Good opportunities are provided for promoting pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development. These include experiencing beauty and a sense of awe through various sensory experiences, and learning about other faiths and cultures when celebrating world religious festivals.
 - The school benefits from good support from the local authority. It regularly reviews the school's work, checks on developments and provides helpful training and support for staff and governors.
 - The school's partnership work contributes strongly to helping the school achieve value for money by sharing resources. Leadership has been strengthened by sharing expertise across the federation. Pupil premium funding from both schools has been used to appoint a joint family support worker which has greatly improved links with parents and carers and pupils' attendance and behaviour. The federation has also ensured good use of pupil premium funding to provide additional learning support in communication, literacy and numeracy. Partnerships with local schools have been strengthened by the advice, training and support given by the school's outreach support, which is valued highly by those schools who receive it
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has developed its role considerably since the previous inspection. It has overseen good improvement in all aspects of the school's work. It now questions and checks the school's effectiveness more closely through committees and first-hand visits. The governing body has an accurate view of the quality of teaching. It has provided good support for the executive headteacher in eliminating weaknesses and improving the quality of teaching by measures that are clearly linked to teachers' pay. The governing body

oversees good arrangements for setting targets for the executive headteacher, based on priorities for whole school improvement. It ensures the pupil premium funding is spent wisely to support learning and narrow any gaps in these pupils' achievement when compared with other pupils. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding pupils.

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	124505
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	406248

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	75
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Symons
Headteacher	Melsa Buxton
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2010
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