

Gladstone Primary School

Anchor Road, Sandford Hill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST3 5EW

Inspection dates 13–14 March 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.

- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress considering their starting points.
- The quality of teaching is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection particularly in mathematics, as a result of effective leadership.
- Nearly all pupils make the progress expected of them by the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils making better progress is growing and compares favourably with the national average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress.
- Behaviour and safety are good because there are good systems in place to support this. The pupils have good adult role models to help with any issues that they may have.
- The headteacher ensures that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning are strong. She has a clear view of how successful the school can be.
- This school prides itself on being an inclusive community. Everybody is made to feel welcome and fully included, and enjoys equality of opportunity regardless of background or ability.
- The strong senior leadership team has a good overview of the progress pupils make as they move through the school. The team ably supports the headteacher by using a range of initiatives to support pupils' basic skills and to improve teaching.
- Governance is a considerable strength of the school because the governing body provides relentless support and challenge in the quest for improvement for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Despite children making good progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' overall achievement in Key Stage 1 is not as strong as in Key Stage 2.
- The outstanding practice is not effectively shared across the school, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 27 lessons. They also made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2, 4 and 6. Observations were made of the teaching of letters and sounds they make (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1.
- Separate meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed information from 17 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- They took account of the views of staff from 39 questionnaires that they completed.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation including national assessment data, school assessments, the school’s view of its own performance, local authority reports, curriculum information, pupils’ work and safeguarding documents.

Inspection team

Jean Tarry , Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Barnes

Additional Inspector

Sheila Loughlin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of a White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is greater than the national average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well above average.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring high expectations and setting appropriately high targets for all pupils
 - ensuring a continuously rigorous approach to the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning, especially at Key Stage 1, so that in all lessons it is good or better by:
 - finding more effective ways of sharing the best practice in teaching across the school
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their basic skills across the curriculum particularly for the more-able
 - ensuring marking enables pupils to know clearly how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start school with skills that are generally well below those expected for their age, especially in literacy and social skills. They make good progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well, despite some teaching that requires improvement.
- Attainment is below average and improving at the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is still below average overall but close to the national average. Attainment has improved since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment in English is broadly average and in mathematics it is improving steadily. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that the improving trend in attainment is set to continue.
- A high proportion of pupils attain the expected levels in English and mathematics in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. A growing number also exceeds the expected progress. However, although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is increasing well in English, this is not as evident in mathematics.
- The vast majority of pupils make the progress expected of them. The proportion of pupils who do better than this has increased since the previous inspection and compares favourably to national figures. Again, the school's data, supported by inspection evidence, show that this trend of improvement is set to continue.
- Disabled pupils and those who have a statement of special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the highly effective support that they receive from teaching assistants and specialist support teachers.
- The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium has improved because their progress is checked and support is closely tailored to their needs. This group generally make good progress as they travel through the school. Attainment for these pupils is in line with that of other similar pupils nationally and with other pupils in the school not eligible for pupil premium funding.
- All other groups of pupils achieve well, including the small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, because of the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 is just below average. It has improved since the last inspection. However, the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) could further improve to ensure it has a greater impact on pupils' literacy skills at all key stages.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage varies. Although there is a good range of activities, both indoors and outside, that captures children's interests and enables them to make good progress, some teaching still requires improvement. This is because it is not well planned and does not have a sharp enough focus on children's needs particularly for the more able. As a result, progress for some children is slow.
- In Key Stage 1, teaching ranges in quality from some that requires improvement to some that is outstanding. There has been a great deal of change in this key stage that has impacted on the continuity and quality of the provision.
- In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching ranges from good to outstanding. The good teaching is generally well planned.
- In the good lessons, teachers use information about pupils' progress and abilities to closely match activities to pupils' needs. The good teaching is entertaining and lively. One pupil said, 'The teachers make the lessons exciting and the learning gets stuck in your head'.
- When teaching is outstanding, it challenges pupils' independent thinking skills and extends the more-able to achieve their full potential, for example, Year 6 pupils were engrossed in

calculating the number of tombs they could fit into a difficult space to stop the Pharaoh's fighting in the after-life. Pupils say, 'lessons are always like this, the teacher makes it fun'.

- In an outstanding Key Stage 1 lesson, the teacher set challenging activities of differing levels of difficulty for different groups of pupils. The more-able worked independently to solve fraction problems using their pirate theme. The pupils understood exactly what was expected of them and tackled the work with great enthusiasm. All made excellent progress as a result.
- In a small amount of less successful teaching, teachers do not plan work effectively for pupils' different levels of need. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations and do not set challenging enough targets for the more-able pupils, especially in mathematics or when applying and developing their basic skills in other subjects. Sometimes marking does not make it clear what pupils have to do next to improve their work.
- In Key Stage 1, there is not always a fully rigorous approach to the teaching of letters and the sounds they make.
- Teaching assistants work is strong and adds value to the good or outstanding provision across the school. This work supports vulnerable groups very well indeed and makes a positive difference to the quality of pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school and the parents, pupils and staff confirm this. The pupils are very proud of their 'awesome' school which they helped to design. They enjoy coming to school and try to achieve their very best. Attendance is average and there are good systems in place to address any issues.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, for example the older pupils regularly listen to the younger pupils read at lunchtime. Occasionally, pupils' concentration lapses when teaching does not fully hold their interest.
- The learning mentor provides effective support, as does the community worker. They work effectively to ensure any barriers to pupils' learning are addressed, particularly with potentially vulnerable pupils. Pupils' needs are assessed regularly and their progress is checked so that most make good progress.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind is very rare and that all issues are dealt with effectively by the school. Pupils say it is a safe school. They know about the dangers when using the internet and how to keep themselves safe if there are any risks.
- Pupils' good behaviour and their respect for each other and for pupils from other cultures show how well the school caters for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, leaders and managers, including the governing body, have tackled weaknesses in teaching and held teachers more closely to account for pupils' progress and achievement. This is resulting in better teaching and better achievement. It is giving the school the capacity to improve even further.
- The performance management of all staff has been effective. The link between performance and salary increases has been firmed up. Staff are fully aware of the link between improving outcomes for pupils and their salary progression. Leaders and managers are equally aware that some teaching still requires improvement and that further work is necessary to improve its quality.
- Leaders and managers know how well the school is doing and where it could do better. They do not share the excellent practice across the school as effectively as they could. However, the plans for future development are based on specific priorities and have a sharp focus on measuring, at regular intervals, how much progress has been made in improving things.
- The school offers a stimulating curriculum that generally meets the needs and interests of its

pupils. This is driving up standards steadily over time. Many after-school activities and visits are arranged to fit in with curricular themes.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a strength of the school. Pupils are taught to be reflective in assemblies, to use resilience with their reading tasks and reasoning in their mathematical development.
- The school works closely with parents, the vast majority of whom are very pleased with the education it provides for their children. The school works well with outside agencies to make a real difference to pupils who may be at risk.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and leaders and managers are committed to tackling discrimination of any kind.
- Procedures and policies for safeguarding are fully in place and implemented effectively.
- The local authority has been effective and has provided support to challenge rigorously any underperformance. It has provided an audit of the quality of teaching and learning across the school and worked with senior leaders to build the capacity to sustain improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school very well and uses information about pupils' performance astutely to compare the school's effectiveness with that of other schools locally and nationally. It provides good support and challenge in a relentless quest for further improvement. It knows how good the teaching is and what needs to be done to improve it further. It knows the importance of performance management and its link to pay progression. Governors ensure that the pupil premium is used appropriately to provide pupils known to be eligible for this funding with the support they need to achieve as well as other groups in the school. The governing body checks on the impact that funding has on pupils' progress in all areas and has made a significant impact with the reading initiatives put in place.

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	124031
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	402221

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Bartley
Headteacher	Elaine Preston
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2010
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