

Tittensor CofE (VC) First School

Beechcliffe Lane, Tittensor, Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9HP

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- The headteacher, who is well supported by the teaching staff and governors, has provided strong leadership, resulting in consistent improvement in the school.
- Teachers provide a wide range of interesting lessons. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress has improved teaching and pupils' learning throughout the school.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics to reach standards that are above average when they leave the school.
- The teaching and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.
- The pastoral care provided for pupils, and especially those who have challenges in their lives that make them vulnerable, is excellent. Pupils respond very well to this support, which is a key factor in their good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they know how to stay safe and healthy. They enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is above average.
- Relationships across the school are very positive and adults provide excellent role models.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' attainment in writing is the weakest aspect of their learning because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write in all subjects.
- Although teachers generally match work to the needs and abilities of the pupils, and use their prior learning well, teachers do not consistently challenge them to reach the higher levels.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to work on their own.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited six lessons and observed three teachers. The headteacher joined the inspector for five of these observations.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school improvement plans, self-evaluation documents, achievement information and documents relating to safeguarding children.
- The inspector took account of the 14 responses to the online Parent View survey and the nine responses to the staff questionnaire during the inspection.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding, which provides extra funding for looked after children, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. There is an average proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The main needs of these pupils relate to moderate learning difficulties.
- The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The next largest minority ethnic group is from a White and Asian background.
- 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?

- Raise achievement in writing by making sure that teaching is consistently effective in helping pupils to develop their writing skills across all subjects.
- Raise the quality of teaching by ensuring that all teachers provide work which consistently stretches the more-able pupils and provides greater opportunities for them to work on their own.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment in Year 2 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap between boys and girls has closed and the school is continuing to make sure boys are fully engaged in their learning. All pupils from all backgrounds, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school and their achievement exceeds that of their peers nationally.
- Children start school with a range of skills and knowledge that are expected for their age, although writing skills are lower. They settle quickly into the school's routines and enjoy learning. As a result of the good teaching and stimulating range of activities, they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium funding consistently make good progress in line with their peers. In 2012 in reading, writing and mathematics, these pupils were about a term behind other pupils in the school, but they exceeded the levels achieved by similar pupils nationally. This is an inclusive school where extra support is expertly targeted to meet individual needs and supports the work being done in lessons, thus promoting equality of opportunity.
- The results of the phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1 in 2012 were below the expected level. The school has introduced a new approach to the teaching of phonics (the knowledge of the sounds letters make). As a result, the quality of teaching has improved and pupils are showing good levels of understanding. The teaching of reading is effective throughout the school and pupils' attainment in reading has been consistently above average.
- Fewer pupils reached the higher standard of Level 3 than the school expected, especially in writing. This is due to pupils not always having the opportunity to write longer pieces of work in both English lessons and other subject areas.
- Of those parents who completed the online questionnaire, most agreed with the pupils who feel they make good progress in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Rigorous monitoring of teaching has improved teaching across the school and resulted in lessons which engage pupils in their learning and a greater focus by teachers on pupils' progress. The pace of lessons has accelerated and pupils are engrossed and involved, so their progress moves rapidly.
- Due to good questioning and discussion skills, teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and is the reason for children's good progress. Teachers and support assistants alike play an important part in promoting rapid development of knowledge and skills, and developing very positive relationships.
- Teaching is well matched to the ages and needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Effective resources are chosen and a good range of activities stimulate the children's interest and extend their knowledge and skills well. Adult-led sessions are well planned and opportunities for children to practise their skills in a variety of interesting activities are the foundation for their good learning. The outside area is used well and provides an exciting

environment in which children are involved in their own activities.

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils in lessons and provide a good range of interesting activities in which they can use their knowledge and skills. For example, in a lesson on story characters, pupils explored feelings, attitudes and a wide range of responses to given situations. However, pupils are not given enough opportunity to write longer pieces of work in other subjects in order to develop and reinforce their writing skills.
- Teachers know the pupils well and constantly check they understand their work. They use their awareness of how much progress pupils are making to modify their lessons, thereby promoting further learning.
- The other adults who support pupils' learning play an important part in their good progress. They lead daily groups in the phonics, reading and writing sessions, as well as intervention and support groups for those with special educational needs. They have good questioning skills and discuss aspects of learning effectively with pupils, leading to good progress being made by the pupils in their care.
- Teachers do not always provide opportunities for pupils to work alone and so develop their ability to become independent learners.
- Teachers do not always make sure that work is finely tuned to the needs of the more-able pupils. As a result, these pupils are not consistently stretched and their learning is not always extended sufficiently for them reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- The excellent relationships the adults form with the pupils contribute strongly to their good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils settle well to their work and are respectful of each other and of their teachers. All parents and carers who spoke to the inspector recognised the good behaviour of the pupils at the school and how well they are looked after.
- Pupils stated that they feel very safe in school due to the excellent pastoral care they receive from the adults in the school. This is especially effective for those pupils who are vulnerable and have social and emotional issues.
- Generally, pupils' behaviour in lessons is good and pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. However, just occasionally there is some inappropriate behaviour and pupils lose concentration, but this is rare and is usually because the teacher has not provided them with appropriately demanding work.
- A very small number of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire suggested that there may be some bullying, but pupils said that there is no bullying of any kind, including physical, emotional and cyber-bullying. Pupils are confident the adults will sort out any problems that they may have quickly and effectively. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to the school are shown in their above-average attendance.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, especially in terms of internet safety. Pupils move around the school in a safe and calm manner and play together well. All pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, say they feel safe at school and older pupils enjoy acting as mentors for younger ones.

The leadership and management are good

- Good, rigorous leadership has set up a very clear vision for improving teaching and pupils' progress. It has also instilled a positive atmosphere based on the excellent relationships among the pupils and between the adults and pupils.
- Rigorous checks on the work of the school take place regularly. Meetings to discuss pupils' progress reflect a clear focus on making sure the pupils' potential is reached and that teachers consistently track their achievement. These actions have resulted in improvements in teaching, learning and pupils' progress.
- Improving attendance to above-average levels has been a major leadership and management success. Senior leaders work well with parents and carers, ensuring there is no discrimination and that all pupils are treated equally.
- Even though the school is small, the headteacher has successfully distributed responsibility amongst staff. Teaching assistants feel involved and challenged in their work. Subject coordinators use a good range of strategies, including pupil interviews, to check the quality of work in their areas of responsibility.
- The close partnerships with the local authority and the careful checking of the school's work led to the identification of the need to further develop the subjects the pupils are taught. A good balance between the needs of literacy and numeracy and other subjects is being created. The pupils enjoy the new range of topics.
- Staff performance is managed effectively. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their practice and to continually improve through the targets identified for them. The school is good at ensuring that continuing professional development supports staff during this process.
- The school commissions training through a range of sources, such as external consultants and the local authority. This training has improved the quality of the teaching of phonics, has helped leaders to evaluate the quality of teaching, and has developed the leadership skills of staff who have specific responsibilities. The local partnership of schools provides moderation for teachers' judgements on pupils' work and good opportunities to share good practice. Although the local authority has a light-touch approach to the school, it has provided good guidance regarding lesson observations and in aspects of leadership and management.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body uses a good range of strategies to check the school's work. Governors visit each class on a regular basis, and detailed reports are received. They speak to pupils and report back to the full governing body. Regular checks regarding health and safety, safeguarding and child protection take place. Statutory requirements are met and the budget is reviewed regularly. Such good practice, together with appropriate training, is making sure they can and do act to challenge and support the school. This allows them to raise questions,

for example, about progress in writing and phonics. They have a clear idea about where the best progress and teaching are to be found. Performance management is used well to challenge and improve the school. There is a clear link between promotion and the need for the individual to have a record of high-quality teaching. Governors have a clear understanding of the pupils who qualify for the pupil premium and how the funding is used to improve these pupils' progress.

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	124279
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	412360

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alistair Drayton
Headteacher	Gill Sands
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2009
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