

# St James CofE (VC) Primary School

Brook End, Longdon, Rugeley, WS15 4PL

**Inspection dates** 30 April–1 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in all key stages. From having expected levels of attainment when they enter the Reception class, pupils at the end of Year 6 attain above-average standards in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well planned and interesting and teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together.
- Teaching programmes offer many interesting activities well matched to pupils' abilities and supplemented by a range of visitors and visits.
- Pupils feel safe and can explain how to keep safe in different situations including when using the internet. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school and pupils show respect for adults and other children.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership, staff morale is high and the school is highly valued by parents. Leaders, managers and governors have brought about improvements in achievement, teaching and leadership and management.
- Governance has improved and governors hold the school to account well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always encourage pupils to assess their own work and that of other pupils, which misses opportunities to deepen their understanding.
- Homework is inconsistent in quality and not always as interesting and engaging as it should be, slowing pupils' progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons and a session involving the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make). One lesson was jointly observed with the headteacher.
- He held meetings with a group of pupils, members of staff, three governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Individual pupils read aloud to the inspector.
- The inspector observed the school's work and examined various documents including ones relating to safeguarding and behaviour, the school's records of the progress pupils make, and records of lesson observations. He looked at children's books and took account of questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector looked at 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally to parents collecting their children after school.

## Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding from central government for pupils known to be eligible for free-school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority, or who have a parent in the armed forces).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or having a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- All classes except for the Reception class comprise two year groups.
- 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?

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to discuss and evaluate their own work and that of other children.
- Set homework in a range of subjects that is of consistent quality and that is interesting and challenging.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils in all key stages make good progress. Children enter Reception at levels in line with expectations and by the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils reach above-average standards in most subjects including English and mathematics. Previous variations in progress have been tackled so that the progress of different groups of pupils is good.
- Learning is good in all key stages. In a Reception lesson, children achieved well in physical and social development and speaking and listening because they were fully absorbed in the range of activities including working on a 'building site' playing with Noah's Ark, and drawing using the computer. Staff encouraged children's language well through comments and questions. In a numeracy lesson for older pupils, they made good progress in using percentages in practical situations through a wide variety of challenging games and activities.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read widely and often supported well by parents. They use their good understanding of phonics to help them with unfamiliar words and can explain in their own words what they have just read. Standards in the national phonics check for Year 1 pupils were high in relation to the national average.
- Good language, numeracy and literacy skills are applied well in other subjects. In a good religious education lesson, older pupils discussed potential tensions between religious convictions and work duties sensitively and thoughtfully, guided by the teacher's skilful questioning. Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects including music and sports. They are well prepared for the next stages of their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because difficulties are clearly identified and suitable provision is made including one-to-one or small-group support and special programmes.
- Pupil-premium funding is used to give well-focused support and computer-related resources to pupils eligible for free school meals so these pupils achieve well. In 2012 there were too few eligible pupils to comment on their attainment without identifying them. The school's data show that these pupils achieve higher standards than the national average for pupils eligible for free school meals. The difference between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school is generally narrowing. In some year groups eligible pupils are ahead of the others and achieve similarly so that there are no gaps in attainment.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' literacy, mathematics and topic work show the effect of good teaching over time. The school's own observations of teaching also show clear evidence of good teaching. This was borne out by inspection evidence.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good and teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together. Teachers convey high expectations of achievement to pupils reinforced by carefully planned lessons and work pitched at the right levels. Reception children made good progress in learning letter sounds and letter shapes because the teacher included activities such as moving letter balls around on a large sheet of material and children made the letters of their names out of dough which they greatly enjoyed.

- Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 progressed well in planning a story with a historical theme because the teacher had introduced many Egyptian artefacts to stimulate them and structured the lesson well so that pupils confidently generated their own ideas.
- Good strategies are used to encourage learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a strong contribution. Teachers are skilled at posing searching questions, sometimes needing a quick one-word answer, at other times requiring the pupil to reflect and give their own views at length. Pupils respond well, developing increasing confidence in expressing themselves.
- Teachers modify the lesson and the planning of later lessons so that the work continues to be pitched at the right level for different groups of pupils. There is a positive climate for learning and pupils enjoy lessons. Pupils know their targets to help their learning, for example to use more descriptive words in their writing.
- Teachers do not always give enough opportunities to pupils to assess their own work and that of other pupils so that opportunities are missed for pupils to deepen their understanding and develop self-evaluation skills. Homework is not of consistent quality across different year groups or subjects and not always as interesting and engaging as it should be, so that progress is slowed.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils have a positive attitude to learning encouraged by the school's inclusive climate. Pupils are absorbed and interested in their learning. No children have been excluded either for a short period or permanently.
- Pupils attend school regularly because good attendance is encouraged and any absences are monitored and action taken if necessary. Pupils are very punctual to lessons because they look forward to their learning. Pupils are quick to give examples of lessons and activities they especially like including sports and music.
- The school is adept at drawing on a wide range of services and other sources to help individual pupils, whose circumstances make them and their families vulnerable, receive strong support.
- Teachers manage behaviour well, helped by the good relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The pupils are respectful of adults and each other and have good manners. Parents are rightly confident that behaviour in the school is good.
- At break times behaviour is sociable and friendly and pupils enjoy the spacious play area including spaces for climbing and seating areas. Lunchtimes are social occasions where pupils happily chat with their friends.
- Parents are confident their child is safe at school. Pupils too feel safe in school. They understand in different ways according to their age how to keep safe and can explain examples of keeping safe near roads or rivers. They are especially aware of safety when using the internet and older pupils talk confidently about the potential risks of using social networking sites.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying including name calling and say that any bullying is rare. They are sure that if bullying does occur it will be dealt with by staff. They also know they can go to a member of staff if they have any worries or problems and that staff will listen to them and take their concerns seriously.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide effective leadership. Staff morale is high and staff form a strong team.
- Self-evaluation gives a clear picture of the school's strengths and where it can improve. Teaching is monitored by senior staff and others and the school has a clear picture of the quality of teaching.
- Staff performance is managed well so that the school's priorities are met. Staff speak appreciatively of the useful and well-focused opportunities to improve their practice through courses and visits to other schools.
- The school enjoys good relationships with parents as vividly conveyed when the inspector spoke informally to parents collecting their children after school.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well because the school monitors the progress of pupils to ensure that each individual makes good progress, and leaders take action where necessary if anybody is at risk of falling behind. There is no evidence of discrimination.
- The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well including through good religious education lessons, themed weeks of learning, and strong links with the local church.
- The local authority provides medium levels of support through monitoring visits and lesson observations and 'learning walks' which have been effective in helping the school to improve since the previous inspection.
- The school works effectively in partnership with others including services such as the health service, universities and other schools to benefit its pupils.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors have challenged leaders so that achievement and teaching and the overall effectiveness of leadership have improved and good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been sustained. Governors know the standards that the pupils reach and are aware of the importance of recognising pupils' starting points in relation to judging progress. They know the quality of teaching in the school accurately. Governors know exactly the amount spent on pupil premium, how it is used and why and the effectiveness of the interventions for these pupils. They are involved in the head teacher's appraisal, seeking 'outside' advice as necessary, and have an up to date picture of the appraisal of other staff. They know what the school is doing to reward good teaching and to tackle any underperformance. Governors manage funds well so that staff and other resources are effectively deployed.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124260
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402245

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	86
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Wardle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Slymn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 490378
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 490378
<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@st-james.staffs.sch.uk



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