

Sneyd Green Primary School

Sneyd Street, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST6 2NS

Inspection dates 2–3 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not yet good. Too few pupils make more than expected progress from their starting points or reach the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. The needs of groups of differing ability are not always sufficiently taken into account in teachers' planning. Pupils are not always given the opportunity to work independently of the teacher to solve problems.
- Pupils are not always given precise enough guidance about how to improve their work, particularly in writing.
- The arrangements for the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) limit pupils' opportunities to put what pupils have learned into practice in their reading and writing.
- Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in checking and driving improvement in the quality of teaching in their subjects. Good practice in school is not, therefore, spread widely enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of consistently good teaching.
- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, gives very clear direction. Despite recent significant difficulties in staffing, actions taken by the school to eliminate underachievement and to improve progress, particularly in mathematics, have proved successful.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are keen to learn and have very good relationships with each other and adults in the school. They behave well, are courteous and polite. They say they feel safe.
- Governors are very well informed and are fully involved in the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and improvement-planning procedures. They provide a good level of support and challenge.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons and made short visits to other activities led by teachers and trained assistants. These included eight lesson observations carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Two groups of pupils met with inspectors. Discussions were also held with staff, including senior and middle leaders. Meetings were conducted with the Chair of the Governing Body and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and read a range of documents. These included documents about the school's own evaluation of its work, school-improvement plans, pupils' current progress, policies and records on safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Judith Tolley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lyn Pender

Additional Inspector

John Ashley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sneyd Green is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority and children of service families) is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is higher than average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average but varies from year to year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Kidswatch Care Club shares its site with the school but operates independently of the school. It is inspected separately.
- There have been significant changes in staff since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school by:
 - ensuring teachers always use assessment information well in their lesson planning so that pupils are always given the right amount of challenge and support
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively to solve problems, independently of adults
 - making sure that the written feedback pupils receive always gives them precise guidance about how to improve their work, especially their writing and their spelling.
- Raise attainment and improve progress further in English by:
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to apply their learning in phonics in their reading and writing
 - improving attendance further.
- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by further developing the role of subject leaders to drive improvement in teaching and learning in their subjects and to ensure staff are accountable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although the majority of pupils make expected progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, the progress pupils make as they move through the school is uneven, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Many pupils enter the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below expectations for their age. Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their personal, social and communication skills so that most begin Year 1 confident learners with skills and knowledge in line with age-related expectations.
- Overall, pupils develop their reading and writing skills adequately but their progress as they move through the school is uneven. Opportunities are missed to link their learning in phonics with their reading and writing. The youngest are able to apply their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) successfully to read and write simple words and sentences. By the end of Year 6, most read a variety of texts with fluency and understanding. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about what they have read, empathise with characters in stories and predict what will happen next.
- Standards in mathematics and English are close to average and the progress pupils are making in these subjects is improving. Pupils are treated equally and most now make the progress expected of them from their starting points, but the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress in mathematics and English is lower than that found nationally.
- Pupils with special educational needs are making the same expected progress as their peers because of the extra help they are given.
- The progress of pupils who are eligible for pupil-premium funding exceeds that of others in this group nationally. The extra support that the school is providing with this funding enables these pupils to reach their targets and to make the same expected progress as their peers. Gaps between the performance of different groups, including those receiving this funding, are closing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is too variable across the school. Although outstanding practice was observed, the quality of teaching is not consistently good or better across the school, except in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and requires improvement, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Evidence from joint observations, made by inspectors and school leaders, support these judgements.
- In some lessons, pupils' progress is slowed because planning does not take their needs sufficiently into account. For instance, opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to learn from each other, for example, in developing their reading skills. Pupils sometimes lose time either waiting for the teacher to help them because the task is too difficult or waiting for others to catch up because it is too easy.
- In the best lessons, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently or collaboratively. Pupils respond to these opportunities with enthusiasm, especially when tasks involve problem solving. For instance, in a Year 4 English lesson, pupils worked enthusiastically in small groups as detectives, to work out from the clues they were given what kind of character they were dealing with and begin to make notes for a description. However, pupils do not always get the opportunity to work things out for themselves or take the initiative in this way.
- Because of the very detailed planning and the close liaison between the teacher and teaching assistants to meet the needs of different groups, Year 1 pupils made outstanding progress in writing reviews of three books they had read. Their confidence increased as the lesson progressed and they were keen to read out their work to the rest of the class.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress as a result of the very effective use of assessment in planning next steps. Teachers and teaching assistants take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and are skilful in enabling them to learn through

play.

- Although overall pupils make adequate progress in developing early reading and writing skills, their progress is not accelerated. Phonics lessons often take place at the end of teaching sessions, immediately before break or lunch times, when pupils are sometimes tired or restless and find it difficult to concentrate. The timing of these lessons also limits opportunities for follow-up activities which would consolidate pupils' learning further.
- Pupils' work is usually marked regularly and there are instances of best practice within the school. However, marking does not always give pupils the precise guidance they need to improve their writing. In some classes marking does not always pick up errors in spelling so pupils continue to make the same mistakes. Opportunities are also missed to reinforce pupils' targets for writing in subjects other than English.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given good one-to-one support in lessons as well as extra help with English and mathematics, which enables them to participate fully in activities and make the progress expected from their starting points.
- The effect of teaching on students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is variable. Where pupils are given the opportunity to work together to solve problems or explore their ideas, they do so sensibly, reflecting on and respecting one another's views, but they are not always given the opportunity to do this.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are kind, considerate and courteous to each other and to adults in the school. On the rare occasions when pupils go off task, lose concentration or become restless, it is usually because their needs are not being met well enough in lessons or when activities fail to capture their imagination.
- They feel safe and they value the good relationships they have with their teachers and with each other. Attendance is below average but is improving.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards their learning, talk enthusiastically about their lessons, and are keen to do well. When given the chance, they work together sensibly and organise themselves well.
- Pupils have a good understanding and awareness of different types of bullying. Both pupils and parents are confident that any poor behaviour, including discrimination of any sort, is dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and speak enthusiastically about opportunities to take part in sports and other extra-curricular activities.
- They play an active role in decision making through the school council and through organising fundraising activities. They take other responsibilities they have, such as Playground Leaders and Ambassadors equally seriously.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Subject leaders and middle leaders are at the early stages of developing their roles in driving improvement in teaching and learning and so the effects of their work are yet to be seen in improved standards and quality of teaching. The leadership and management of the school therefore requires improvement so that leaders and managers at all levels work well together to spread best practice.
- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to secure further improvement. The senior leadership team have an accurate view of the school's performance, through close tracking of pupils' progress against their targets.
- Despite recent staffing difficulties, the headteacher has been successful in maintaining stability and in improving achievement in mathematics since the last inspection. Issues from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. The school therefore has a good capacity to improve further.
- The quality of teaching of each member of staff is regularly reviewed. The results are used to

secure appropriate training to benefit their professional development and are also used to consider any advancement in pay.

- Safeguarding procedures meet government guidelines.
- The curriculum adequately meets pupils' needs. However, pupils have too little chance to apply their basic skills of writing in subjects other than English. The school is aware that arrangements for the teaching of phonics are in need of review to make sure all pupils make good progress in their reading and writing.
- The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets children's needs well. It is very well planned and frequently adapted as a result of on-going observations of children's progress and interests. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at capturing children's interest and extending their learning through play.
- One-to one support for pupils with special educational needs and for those who have fallen behind enables these pupils to participate successfully in whole-class activities and to catch up on gaps in their learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures through links with a school in Uganda, the 'Agatha Project', and through their residential trip to France. Their understanding of their own cultural heritage is enriched by their links with local potteries and artists. Their understanding of the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom is developing through the school's link with another school.
- The local authority has provided light touch support, particularly for the teaching of mathematics and English, which has had a good effect upon the progress made and standards reached in these subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an excellent understanding of how the school is doing and are clear about what it needs to do to improve further. They are very well informed and participate in various forms of training, including safeguarding. They make sure that pupils and staff are safe by securing effective safeguarding arrangements. Governors frequently check how pupil-premium funding is spent and make sure that it is making a difference. Governors are fully involved in the day-to-day life of the school and in monitoring the performance of the headteacher and setting her relevant targets. They are also aware of the performance of teaching staff. Finances are carefully managed and the budget closely controlled. The governing body plays an active role in the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and improvement planning. It provides strong support, and has done so throughout a period of staffing and financial difficulty. They regularly challenge the school 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	123988
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	411858

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	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Walley
Headteacher	Rosina Lee
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2009
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