

# St Mark's CE (A) Primary School

Wood Terrace, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 4LR

**Inspection dates** 11–12 June 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.

- The pupils achieve consistently well throughout the school.
- From their starting points, pupils make good progress and some make outstanding progress during their time here.
- Nearly all pupils make the progress expected of them by the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils making better progress than this is growing and compares favourably with other pupils across the country.
- The pupils who have special educational needs make good progress as provision is well matched to their requirements.
- The pupils who speak English as an additional language are very well supported and often make good and some make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is usually good and some is outstanding.
- The school cares very well for all its pupils and makes sure that every individual is fully included and has equality of opportunity regardless of background or ability.
- Pupils feel safe in school and they behave well as they are respectful to each other and to adults.
- The headteacher is the driving force behind the school improvement and often shows outstanding leadership in challenging circumstances.
- The senior leaders and governors have stepped up the rigour with which they check on the quality of the teaching. They use information about pupils' progress to hold staff much closer to account for pupils' achievement.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' learning are outstanding in a fully inclusive environment. Cultural aspects of provision are a real strength of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is not as rapid as that in reading and mathematics.
- Some aspects of the way writing is taught are not as good as they could be.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 22 lessons. They carried out one observation jointly with the headteacher. They observed the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and listened to readers in Years 1, 2, 4 and 6. Inspectors also observed support provided for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. Inspectors looked carefully at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teaching and support staff, two groups of pupils, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation summary and development plan; policies and procedures for safeguarding; information about attendance and behaviour; records of monitoring teaching and learning; information about pupils' achievement; minutes of meetings of the governing body; and the headteacher's reports to the governing body.
- Inspectors looked at summaries of questionnaires sent out to parents. There were not enough responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), to generate a summary of parent's views. Inspectors also spoke to some parents before the start of the school day.

## Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patricia Cope

Additional Inspector

Anthony Buckley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St Mark's CE (A) Primary School is much larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.)
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The number of pupils joining the school other than at the usual time for starting is high.
- The school meets the government's floor standards that set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve the rate of progress in writing by:
  - ensuring gaps in writing are accurately identified and effectively addressed
  - ensuring all writing tasks are well matched to pupils' needs
  - ensuring pupils develop their skills with spelling, punctuation and grammar
  - making sure next steps for improvement highlighted in the writing they do across all subject areas are always addressed by pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most of the pupils when they start school have skills which are well below those typically expected for their age, particularly in speaking, listening and language development. A very high proportion of children enter school with little or no English. They make good progress overall in Reception and generally achieve well.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils continue to make good progress although their attainment remains below average. A large proportion of these pupils have joined the school at other times than usual and again, often with little or no English. The school data, supported by inspection evidence, show that the trend of good improvement is set to continue. The pupils progress equally well in Years 3 to 6, reaching broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels in English and mathematics in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is very positive. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is growing and compares favourably with the national average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have a special educational need make good progress because of the highly effective support and good provision that they receive from teachers, teaching assistants and specialist support teachers. There are effective links between home and school and this is an important factor in their success.
- The achievement of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, has improved because their progress is tracked rigorously and support is well matched to their specific needs. This group make good progress and there are no gaps between the level of their attainment and that of their peers in the school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language often make rapid progress. They achieve very well because teaching is sensitive to their needs and they receive well-targeted support.
- The headteacher has successfully focused on the basic skills for reading and mathematics. It is now in their writing that progress is not as strong.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching across the school is good and some is outstanding. Most lessons are well planned and this motivates and engages pupils with relevant tasks that they find enjoyable. In an outstanding lesson in Reception, pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills. They are excited to plan their holiday, pack their cases and get ready for investigating playtime on the beach with their classmates. This allows them to make outstanding progress with their language development.
- In Year 6, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, pupils are encouraged to assess their own success criteria. The pupils are well challenged and make outstanding progress calculating percentages using different written and mental strategies. Detailed explanations are given by the teacher to explore any misconceptions and this supports all learners really well.
- A very small proportion of teaching requires some improvement, especially when tasks are too easy; when this happens the learning slows down for pupils in some groups.
- Marking is regular and very positive and next steps to help them improve are included. However, the consistency of pupils addressing these next steps is not always in place especially in writing across other subjects, such as history and religious education, for example.
- Teachers do not always accurately identify the gaps in learning pupils have in their writing. Consequently, sometimes the tasks they are given are not well matched to the pupils' needs in order to improve their writing skills further.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and support pupils very well particularly for those who have a special educational need or English as an additional language. However, sometimes

misconceptions with spelling, punctuation and grammar are not always addressed by support staff and this can slow progress down in writing.

- In lessons, and around school, good relationships exist between pupils and teachers which contribute to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.
- The quality of teaching has been raised since the last inspection because leaders and managers check its quality regularly and use outcomes to tailor any staff training, with a focus on tackling weaker areas.

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

- The pupils behave well both inside and outside the classrooms. They are proud of their school and really enjoy all it has to offer. As teaching has improved so has attendance, which is now showing a rising trend.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. When teaching does not fully engage their learning interest can wane or off-task chatter grows.
- The inclusion manager provides extremely effective support for all pupils. This is, especially so for the high proportion of pupils who join the school at other than normal times, frequently speaking little or no English or those with attendance or behaviour problems. These pupils settle very quickly and their attendance and behaviour improves. Their needs are assessed accurately and their progress is checked rigorously so that most make good progress.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind is rare and when it does happen it is dealt with quickly by adults in the school.
- Pupils feel safe in the school. They know what situations might cause them harm and know how to handle or avoid them. They are generally aware of potential dangers when using the internet.
- Pupils' good behaviour, their respect for other cultures and religions, and their equal care for those who may be different clearly shows how well the school caters for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One pupil said, 'We learn that different religions and cultures have different views and we try to understand so that it makes us better people.'

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The leadership of the headteacher is a real strength of the school as she continually encourages the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning and includes everyone. She has successfully maintained and accelerated pupils' progress in English and mathematics since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has been strengthened by a very able senior leadership team. The leadership of the teaching of reading has been successful with highly focused guided reading and access to an online book club. The writing is now the school focus.
- The leaders and managers at all levels share a common vision for striving for the very best for all the pupils across the school. One member of staff said, 'The headteacher and senior leaders are the driving force behind the constant school improvement.' There is now a record of improvement, which is provided by the acceleration of pupils' progress and the strengthening of the teaching. This clearly shows that the school has the capacity to improve even further.
- Performance management systems are good; targets are now very demanding and expectations have been raised. Links between the performance management and salary increases have been firmed up. The leaders and managers are aware when teaching requires improvement and they are quick at identifying ways to make improvements. Staff are aware of the link between improving outcomes for pupils and the progression of salary increase.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and the correct priorities for further improvement are identified. Mathematics is well led and managed. There has been a real focus on reading and the impact is evident in lessons and in the increased rate of progress.

- The curriculum enables pupils to progress well with their basic skills and provides creative and stimulating activities. This enables pupils to enjoy their time at the school and to achieve well. There is a range of after-school activities that are very popular. The school strives to work very closely with parents, who are very pleased with the education it provides for the children.
- Leaders and managers provide equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination of any kind. The school community works hard to ensure it is harmonious and that the good achievement of the pupils is proof of their continued success.
- The policies and procedures are all in place for safeguarding; all the staff understand what they entail and carry them out fully.
- The local authority has provided very effective support for the school with staffing issues, training, teaching and learning reviews. It holds the school in very high regard and often uses it as a model to share good practice with others.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has provided support and challenge in the quest for improvement since the last inspection. They use information to compare the school's effectiveness with that of other similar schools locally and nationally.
  - Governors know how good the teaching is and what needs to be done to improve further, including the importance of the performance management. The governors regularly take part in training to keep their skills up to date. They have a good understanding of the school's finances and not only ensure pupil premium funding is used appropriately, but check on its impact on the achievement of those for whom it is intended.

## 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>	124308
<b>Local authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	400123

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	387
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Des Cotton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michelle Johnstone
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 May 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 234411
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