

St John's CE Primary School, Dukinfield

Westmorland Avenue, Dukinfield, Cheshire, SK16 5JA

Inspection dates 12–13 June 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Overall, pupils make good progress and some now make excellent progress. This has improved because of more accurate assessment in Key Stage 1, improvements in teaching and strong support from parents.
- Pupils throughout the school make accelerated progress in reading because of the good approach to teaching letters and sounds and closer partnership with parents.
- Attainment as pupils leave school is above average in English and mathematics
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress because of effective help to promote their language skills.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Teaching is good and some is of a high quality ensuring that activities meet the needs of most pupils.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils are very keen to learn. They feel very safe and enjoy school. Attendance is high.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide high quality leadership. They have high expectations and expect the very best from all.
- Partnership with parents is excellent because the school listens and responds to their needs.
- The governing body provides effective support and challenge to school leaders. They work closely with leaders and this has helped to improve achievement, teaching and behaviour and safety since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all pupils make excellent progress. Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve.
- Pupils' progress in writing in some years is not as brisk as in mathematics and reading. Pupils do not always use punctuation and grammar correctly.
- The monitoring role of subject leaders and those with responsibility for key stages is not always strong enough for them to challenge teachers and raise attainment.
- Occasionally, planning of outdoor activities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage does not cater for a wide range of experiences so that children can make faster progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 parts of lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and scrutinised their work.
- Meetings were held with two different groups of pupils from all ages and from a range of different backgrounds. Inspectors held informal discussions with other pupils.
- Inspectors also held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, one other governor, senior leaders, a representative from the local authority and an independent consultant.
- Inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the performance management of staff, checks on pupils' attainment and progress, records on attendance, behaviour and safety and the school's overview of teaching and learning. They looked at the impact of the school's use of the pupil premium funding. Short discussions giving feedback on teaching and learning were held with teaching and support staff.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 23 parents in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the school's own parent survey. The views of parents were sought during the day when attending training courses.
- Inspectors scrutinised 18 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alastair Younger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St John's CE Primary School is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below 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 in local authority care.) At this school, almost all the pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are those known to be entitled to free school meals and this proportion is above average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - planning more effectively the use of the outdoor play area in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children have a wide range of experiences to promote rapid progress
 - making sure that marking is consistent across the school so that pupils know their targets and how to achieve them as part of the next step for improvement.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing by making sure that:
 - more attention is given to developing pupils' skills so that they do not make simple grammatical and punctuation errors, such as missing full stops
 - pupils have further opportunities to write at length and to celebrate their writing through displays across the school.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the role of some phase and subject leaders so they monitor and challenge teachers to raise achievement, particularly in writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery with skills broadly expected for their age, particularly in communication. As a result of good teaching and effective support at home children make good progress. Progress in some areas of learning is not always fast enough because the outdoor area does not always extend learning. The effective use of questions promotes children's language skills and leads to most reaching and increasingly exceeding the level expected of them by the time they enter Year 1.
- In the past, assessments of pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 were not always accurate and this presented an inaccurate view of the overall progress pupils were making in school. However, this has been corrected and validated externally, and inspection evidence now shows data on attainment and progress is more accurate. Current evidence shows that pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 make good progress from their individual starting points. There is a rise in the number of pupils making more than expected progress especially in reading and mathematics. As a result, they are well prepared for their next stage of learning.
- In the past, pupils' progress has fluctuated in reading and writing, especially in Key Stage 1. However, the school's recent focus on reading has included closer partnerships with parents and this has led to progress being consistently good and often better throughout the school.
- Progress in writing has improved and it is outstanding in Year 4 and 5. However, progress varies between years. For example, in Year 2, marking in pupils' books does not always tell pupils how to improve and pupils make simple grammar or punctuation mistakes such as missing full stops. Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to write at length and celebrate their achievements. In Year 6, pupils' work shows opportunities for lengthy writing in a range of styles but this has not had the impact yet to show brisk progress.
- Pupils' attainment is currently above average by the end of Year 6 for English and well above average for mathematics.
- The results of the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening check of 2012 in Year 1 were above average. This reflects the re-focus on teaching letters and sounds from the Early Years Foundation Stage and other key stages, which is well embedded. As a result, pupils are making rapid progress in reading.
- The pupil premium is effectively used to give one-to-one adult support to advance pupils' learning. As a result, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are making increasingly good progress. Overall, attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is similar to that of those pupils who are not eligible for such funding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making much better progress than previously because of support from well trained staff, detailed plans and the use of modern technology for those pupils with specific needs. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress because they develop good language skills.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some observed was outstanding. This is due to teachers' high expectations and tasks that meet the needs of almost all pupils. Teachers organise lessons well, have very good relationships with pupils and lessons run very smoothly. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- In the outstanding lessons teachers show a very thorough knowledge of the subject. This is often the case in the teaching of mathematics. In Year 6, the teacher teased out the importance of using calculations in the correct order when solving mathematical problems. Pupils gained in confidence and achieved success.
- In some years, pupils have good opportunities to use resources and prompts. For example, in

the Reception class, children use the interactive whiteboard to work on tasks and listen to music and stories, which sustains their interest in a task. However, outdoor activities are not as rich as indoors for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This reduces their progress in some areas of learning.

- Teaching of reading is effective with the focus on teaching letters and sounds. Pupils use these skills well to tackle new words. Links with parents encourage pleasure in reading and this is evident as pupils move through the school. The teaching of writing is not consistently effective and not enough opportunities are provided to improve basic grammar and punctuation skills in a longer piece of writing.
- Most teachers follow the school's marking scheme well; they mark pupils' work regularly. However, in some year groups feedback to pupils about their work is not always consistent and it is not made clear to pupils the steps they need to take to improve. This is especially the case in writing and errors in punctuation and grammar remain unchecked so that pupils do not learn from their mistakes.
- Homework makes a positive contribution to extending pupils' knowledge. It also helps to promote pupils' independent learning skills but most importantly improves reading and writing skills, such as poems.
- Support staff play a positive role in improving pupils' learning, both in and out of the class. This ensures that disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make at least good progress. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same progress as other pupils and reach similar levels in English and mathematics.
- Equality of opportunity is clearly demonstrated by the way the school cares well for all its pupils and offers them the same degree of challenge and high expectation, and ensures that there is no discrimination.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are highly aware of how to stay safe. Through colour-coded identity badges pupils recognise a 'safe' adult, a scheme instigated by their own school council; they know what level of contact to maintain when adults visit the school.
- Pupils and adults, including parents, expressed highly positive views about behaviour over time. This was reflected in what inspectors saw in lessons, the corridors and the playground, where behaviour was outstanding.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning. They are keen to participate in a range of activities as demonstrated during the inspection when 'Arts Week' was taking place. Pupils support and work very well with each other and listen carefully to their teachers. They also show high levels of application when working independently.
- Pupils are very keen, happy and enjoy coming to the school. This is indicated well by their high level of attendance. Punctuality is excellent. They are very polite and respectful to each other and their teachers and support staff.
- Pupils are very aware of the different types of bullying, including how to stay safe on the internet. There have been no cases of racial abuse and bullying in recent years. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when away from the school, such as 'only speak to people you know' as explained by one of the school councillors.
- Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities in the school, such as school councillors and security leaders, who ensure that pupils feel safe. They take the initiative in raising funds for charities such as having the 'Pink Day'. As a result, they make a very positive contribution to the school and the wider community.
- Behaviour is managed most effectively. Pupils value rewards such as weekly whole-school Superstars and eating at the golden table. Sanctions are in place but very rarely applied.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher share high expectations for the school and are driving improvement effectively with the support of the governing body. As a result, achievement and teaching are good and behaviour and safety are outstanding.
- Senior leaders have a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and have quickly addressed weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, such as planning for the different needs of pupils.
- Senior leaders correctly identify priorities for development, based on an accurate view of how well the school is performing, such as improving writing throughout the school. They are aware of the need to implement the 'Teaching Standards' rigorously and to share the outstanding teaching practice already present in the school with all teachers.
- The school has ensured that progression through the pay scales and teachers' performance are directly linked and this has led to improvements in the quality of teaching across the school.
- All in the school share the same vision for the future and are committed to improving the school. Staff take advantage of opportunities for further training to improve their skills, such as relating to supporting pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder. This enables them to improve their teaching as well as meeting more closely the needs of pupils.
- Occasionally, subject and key stage leaders do not always make close checks on teaching and learning, especially on monitoring teachers' feedback in pupils' books to see how far they are related to pupils' progress and targets. As a result, some errors remain, especially in writing.
- The curriculum is enhanced by themed weeks and the focus on art during the inspection produced some high quality work. These activities promote very strongly pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils benefit from a good range of exciting activities and visits.
- Links with parents are excellent. Parents feel this is a school which listens to their views. One parent remarked, 'Ideas are taken on board straight away.' Parents are very well supported through training and support their children at home effectively.
- The local authority has provided appropriate support for the school in recent years. At present, the school receives 'light touch' support based on its proven ability to improve itself.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has had a stronger impact on school improvement. Effective training has enhanced governors' skills, particularly in calling leaders to account. Governors are challenging, supportive and have a good grasp of the school's data on pupils' progress. They are knowledgeable about how their school compares with others. The governing body is aware of the good quality teaching, how this is rewarded and how any underperformance is dealt with. Governors check that the pupil premium funding is spent for the benefit of those pupils who are known to be eligible and that it is making a positive difference to their progress. They ensure safeguarding meets requirements.

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	106228
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	413163

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Nuttall
Headteacher	Vicki Hewitt-Lee
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2010
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