

Forest Park Primary School

Woodall Street, Waterloo Road, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST1 5ED

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school, whatever their ability or background, because of good teaching in every class.
- Teachers have high expectations and lessons consistently engage pupils' interest. As a result, pupils work hard, are enthusiastic, concentrate well and are keen to learn.
- The school provides an exceptional level of pastoral care that is carefully tailored to the different needs of its pupils and their families.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have very positive relationships with each other and with staff. They feel very safe in school because they have great trust in the adults to look after them.
- An excellent range of interesting and exciting activities ensures pupils greatly enjoy school. This curriculum provides particularly well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Effective teamwork from teachers and support staff contributes strongly to pupils' academic and personal development.
- The excellent children's team and the language team are particularly successful in liaising with parents to ensure all pupils do well socially and in their learning.
- Good leadership and management from staff are well supported by the governing body. Together, they have ensured that teaching and pupils' achievement have improved, and continue to do so.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to make achievement outstanding.
- The pace of learning in parts of lessons can be slow for some pupils, and more-able pupils do not always have work that is suitably challenging.
- Despite improvements this year, progress in writing has been a relative weakness in the past, and attainment in writing still lags behind that in reading and mathematics.
- Some pupils' handwriting and presentation are weak, and most pupils are not consistent in using a joined style of handwriting.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed substantial parts of 21 lessons, several of these being joint observations with the headteacher or her deputy.
- The team held formal meetings with members of staff, representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, and with groups of pupils from Years 2, 3, 5 and 6. Inspectors also chatted informally with many other pupils, and heard several pupils read in Years 1 and 6.
- The team took note of 11 replies to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as to the 175 replies to the school's own most recent parental questionnaire. An inspector also spoke informally to several parents at the start of the school day. The team also received 30 replies to a staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, particularly that related to keeping pupils safe, or to tracking their progress and attainment. Inspectors also examined examples of the school's documentation analysing its own performance, including anonymous information about the effectiveness of individual teachers.
- Samples of work in pupils' books were examined, as were displays around the school.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Huda Aslam

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Forest Park is larger than average for a primary school. It includes a Nursery unit in which up to 52 three- and four-year-olds are taught full time.
- Pupils come from an increasingly wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with those from White British, Pakistani or Bangladeshi families forming the largest groups. In recent years, more pupils of Eastern European heritage have started at the school. About three-quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language, a very high proportion. At the time of the inspection, 31 different home languages were known to be spoken by pupils.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is well-above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is high, at around a half. 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 that are looked after by the local authority.
- An unusually high proportion of pupils start at the school or leave other than at the usual time, with a high turnover of pupils in each year group every year. Many of the new arrivals speak little or no English when they start.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which are minimum expectations set for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has changed its status from a community school to a foundation school. It is now linked to several other local schools which are members of the same foundation trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make a greater proportion of teaching outstanding, and so raise attainment, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
 - a good pace of learning is maintained for all pupils throughout lessons
 - more-able pupils are consistently challenged throughout lessons, and do not spend time undertaking tasks that are too easy for them, before moving on to more difficult work
 - teachers extend and consolidate the use of discussion and drama, to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills, and give them a firmer basis for organising their writing
 - adults insist on better standards of presentation and handwriting from pupils in all classes
 - pupils are encouraged to use a joined style of handwriting more consistently, and from an earlier age, to improve their fluency in writing and their spelling.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well at each key stage. Pupils make good progress in lessons and the attainment of individuals improves at a good rate as they get older. The overall picture of attainment from year to year, including that reported in national tests, is greatly distorted, however, by the high levels of mobility that can result in huge changes in the composition of each class from term to term.
- Attainment has remained significantly below average at Key Stage 1, and is still slightly below average at Key Stage 2, because of this mobility factor, despite the good achievement of all pupils.
- Most children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are much lower than those expected for their age. Although they make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, in most years their attainment still falls short of the national average by the start of Year 1, although standards are getting closer to average each year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their abilities because of extremely well-organised provision, work that is matched to their specific needs, and a good balance of help and challenge, particularly from skilled support staff.
- Pupils who are new to the school receive very effective help to settle in and achieve well. Those who speak little English when they arrive acquire the language quickly because of the exceptionally good support they are given by the school's language team. This enables them to become fluent quickly, and to make the same good progress as their classmates.
- Pupils who are entitled to the pupil premium make the same progress as others, although attainment varies from year to year because of differences in each year group. In 2012, for example, the attainment in Year 6 of pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, was about a year and a half behind that of their classmates, in English and mathematics. At the same time, the attainment of such pupils in Year 5 was ahead of their classmates by about a term in English, but slightly lower in mathematics.
- In general, progress and standards in writing have lagged behind those in reading and mathematics. A strong focus this year on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussion, and by the use of drama in some lessons, has raised pupils' progress in writing to match that in mathematics. However, their attainment in speaking, listening and writing remains a relative weakness.
- Too often, pupils do not consistently use a joined style of handwriting to improve their fluency and spelling, even in older classes.
- Progress in reading this year has gone up, with more focus on phonics (how the letters in words represent different sounds) in younger classes, complemented by a more systematic approach to 'guided reading' for older pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers ensure good progress through their knowledge of the personal and academic needs of the pupils in their classes. They prepare work that pupils usually find manageable but challenging and that pupils say is always 'fun'.
- Teachers make extremely good use of the skilled support staff in lessons to involve all pupils, and to help monitor their progress, challenging them to refine their work if they are successful, and putting pupils back on track if they make mistakes. Teachers quickly intervene to correct any misconceptions that pupils have, modifying the lesson to take account of this.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour, and pupils respond well to these. However, not all teachers insist on high standards of presentation and handwriting and, for some pupils, these are weak aspects of their written work.

- The marking of written work is of good quality, and teachers make particularly effective use of conversations with pupils about their work, discussing with them how they can improve it. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how they are doing, and of how they can improve.
- Teachers generally make good use of the school's continually improving assessment systems to ensure that work is neither too easy nor too hard for different groups. Often, however, more-able pupils undertake the same work as most of their classmates, before moving on to more difficult 'extension' work. At times, this initial work is too easy for them and does not challenge them for this part of the lesson.
- Teachers often make good use of a range of strategies to actively involve all pupils in learning, such as discussion in pairs or in groups, or through drama. This is particularly effective in developing speaking and listening skills, and in helping pupils to organise their ideas before they write about a subject. At other times, opportunities to use such strategies are missed.
- Many lessons have a fast pace, so a lot of learning takes place in the time available. At times, however, the pace of learning can slow for part of the lesson, for some or all of the learners, and this is often what prevents good lessons from being outstanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They understand the school's simple rules and the system of rewards and sanctions that back them up. They greatly appreciate the rewards, and say the sanctions are seldom needed beyond the level of an initial warning. Pupils are polite, sensible, friendly and cheerful.
- Pupils bubble over with enthusiasm for learning and for the wide range of activities they do. During the inspection, the imminent hatching of chicks was a topic that continually engaged their attention and interest, and was a frequent topic of excited discussions.
- Pupils stressed their enjoyment of the many trips out they have, as well as how teachers make lessons enjoyable and interesting. They work hard in class, concentrate well and are keen to succeed. They show good levels of persistence and patience when they find an aspect of work difficult.
- Relationships are very good between boys and girls from different backgrounds. They told the team how much they value and enjoy the diversity in their own varied backgrounds, and learning about each other's cultures.
- Pupils undertake responsibilities conscientiously, and take a pride in doing them well. Older pupils particularly enjoy their opportunities to help the younger ones. They do this with kindness and consideration, with Year 6 saying that it is a reward or privilege rather than being work.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, particularly cyber-bullying, and say that it seldom happens in the school. They feel very safe in school and know how to contribute to their own safety. They have great confidence in the adults to address any issues that arise quickly and fairly.
- Pupils who initially struggle to conform to expected standards of behaviour, or who have emotional problems, make excellent progress in their personal development. This is because of the outstanding support they receive from all staff, but particularly from the children's team. Team members liaise closely with families and external agencies to ensure that these pupils and their parents receive carefully tailored individual support both in school and beyond.
- Attendance has gone up significantly this year, from previously low levels, to be broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior staff lead a team who share common goals and priorities. Everyone's efforts are successfully focused on improving pupils' personal development as a secure basis for helping them achieve well academically.

- Attendance, and teaching and achievement in reading and writing have all been successfully targeted for improvement by the school in the last two years.
- A key strength has been the improvement of assessment systems, and the use of subsequent data to check on progress, identify any issues, and then to work as a team to address them. This has ensured that different groups in the school all progress well.
- The school's very detailed understanding of its pupils and their families, and the willingness to go the extra mile in supporting both, contributes strongly to its success, despite many challenges.
- The employment of the children's team to liaise with parents and to support pupils emotionally and socially, and of the language team to give specialist help to pupils who speak English as an additional language, has been exceptionally successful. The work done by these teams to promote the involvement of parents in their children's education is outstanding.
- The exciting, wide-ranging curriculum makes a major contribution to pupils' academic and social progress, and to their great enjoyment of school.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching rigorously, through observations of lessons and by looking at outcomes for pupils. The school provides support where needed, particularly through effective professional training, and ensures that good performance by teachers is suitably rewarded.
- Money is spent wisely. The pupil premium funding is used effectively to ensure that eligible pupils make the same progress as their classmates and are fully involved in all aspects of school life. This demonstrates the school's commitment to providing equal opportunities for all.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have good systems to understand the strengths and weaknesses in the school, including by making use of data about pupils' achievement. They also keep a close eye on how well teachers are performing, and ensure issues are addressed and success rewarded. Their knowledge enables them to provide a good balance of challenge and support to the school. Governors rightly give high priority to keeping pupils safe, and work well with staff, particularly the site manager, to ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements. They have a clear understanding of how and why pupil premium funding has been spent, but have not yet developed clear procedures to monitor in detail the impact of this on pupils' achievement.

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	123997
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	412984

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Garner
Headteacher	Jan Baggaley
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2009
Telephone number	01782 234979
Fax number	01782 236417
Email address	forestpark@sgfl.org.uk

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