

Spire Junior School

Jawbones Hill, Derby Road, Chesterfield, S40 2EN

Inspection dates 10–11 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils enjoy school. They behave extremely well and this contributes to a very calm and positive atmosphere in and around the school. As a result, pupils feel very safe and secure.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have high expectations of both pupils and staff. They have been successful in bringing about improvements, particularly in the teaching of writing.
- The school provides high levels of support to pupils and families. Parents appreciate this. The learning and behaviour mentors play a significant role in ensuring that all pupils are engaged and motivated.
- Progress is good in all year groups and, by the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are often above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The governing body knows the school well. They are well trained and make positive suggestions; for instance, in improving the information going to parents.
- Teachers enthuse pupils by making lessons interesting. They check pupils' work regularly and they are also very effective in helping pupils to check their own work so they know how to improve it.
- All groups of pupils, including those eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching. Best practice in teaching is not shared or applied consistently across all classes.
- Pupils do not take enough care over their spelling, and careless mistakes go uncorrected.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons taught by five teachers. Two of these lessons were seen together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff expressed in 16 questionnaires.
- The Parent View website was consulted although there were only two responses posted on the online questionnaire. The inspector took account of the school's own surveys of the views of parents and pupils, and those of parents spoken to at the start of the school day.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including records of governing body meetings, the school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses and improvement plans, documents relating to pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching, and records of behaviour and attendance.
- The work in pupils' books was examined during lesson observations, and examples of extended writing from across the school were reviewed.

Inspection team

Christine Merrick, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average junior school.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small minority of pupils are from ethnic minority groups, and almost none speak English as an additional language English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is more than double the national average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care, and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- 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?

- Make more teaching outstanding by making sure that best practice is shared and consistently applied in all classes.
- Improve pupils' spelling by making sure that teachers:
 - consistently insist on accurate spelling in all subjects
 - encourage pupils to look more carefully at their spelling choices
 - do not overlook simple spelling mistakes when they mark work in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When pupils join the school in Year 3, attainment levels are broadly average. By the time they reach Year 6, standards are typically above average in all subjects.
- In 2012, standards dipped and pupils did not achieve as well as in previous years. The pupils in Year 6 last year were predominantly boys, who achieved less well than the girls. Pupils in the current Year 6 have achieved well, with both boys and girls reaching or exceeding expected levels. Nearly half these pupils are working at higher than expected levels in both writing and mathematics. However, fewer pupils have reached higher levels in spelling, punctuation and grammar because spelling is not taught consistently well.
- Pupils say that they like reading, including pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 who find reading more difficult. The more-able readers read with fluency and very good expression. By the end of Year 6, pupils talk enthusiastically about books they have read and collections of work by different authors that they have enjoyed. Many pupils, though not all, read regularly at home so their progress is well supported.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs usually achieve well. Their needs are very carefully identified and they receive very effective additional support in class from teaching assistants or other adults working with them. Where appropriate, they have one-to-one or small-group support so some individuals make outstanding progress.
- Progress in lessons is typically good. Teaching is well structured and there are always opportunities for pupils to check their work against success criteria set out by teachers. Pupils concentrate well and work together to make sure they achieve the challenging targets set for them. They know how well they are doing and are able to talk about what they need to do next in order to improve their work.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2012, pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium achieved less well than their classmates. In English they were on average 12 months behind their classmates and in mathematics 18 months behind. Current year group information shows that pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium are now making good progress in line with other groups and their attainment is rising. This is because the funding is used well to support additional help in class, and learning and behaviour mentors provide valuable additional guidance.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers know their subjects well. They communicate their enthusiasm and enjoyment to the pupils, so they are well motivated and develop excellent attitudes to learning. Teachers are proud to be part of the school and have high expectations of themselves and their pupils.
- Teachers check regularly how pupils are progressing. They use this information to plan lessons so that work is extremely well matched to the needs of all pupils. Teaching assistants and other adults working with the pupils provide well-targeted support so that pupils at all levels experience success.
- In most classes, systems for checking pupils' understanding during lessons are excellent. Pupils check their work against success criteria, analyse their writing to ensure they have included all necessary elements, and are asked to explain their thinking in mathematics. However, in some

lessons, these are not as effective and opportunities for clarifying and extending learning are missed because teachers do not follow up pupils' comments fully. For instance, in a lesson on instructions, talking about 'time openers', the teacher accepted the pupils' suggestions, all of which were time openers for sentences, but did not take the opportunity to discuss which of the time openers were most commonly used for instructions and which were less appropriate choices for the purpose to hand.

- Marking is often used well to explain what has been successful and what needs to be improved. Time is then provided for pupils to act on the advice given. However, while they enjoy 'polishing pen' work to improve the style of their writing and their use of punctuation, there is no consistent focus on accurate spelling in all subjects.
- Writing has been a focus for improvement and the success of this can be seen in the enthusiasm with which both boys and girls tackle writing tasks. These are brought to life with interesting contexts such as pirate stories or persuading the headteacher that they deserve rewards for their work. Clear frameworks and a 'toolbox' for each type of writing give pupils clear guidance, but in focusing on these, spelling is often overlooked and mistakes go uncorrected.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively and pupils are well prepared for the next phase of their education. Pupils in Year 6 said that they were excited to be transferring to secondary school and looking forward to the challenges it offered.
- Good relationships nurture a sense of trust and pupils say that teachers talk to them and help them as much as they can so they can all succeed. In response to the questionnaire, one teacher commented, 'Our staff all care about the children in our school. Every child really does matter here.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' excellent behaviour contributes greatly to the positive, purposeful atmosphere, both in and out of the classroom. This is because the school provides warm, caring environments where pupils thrive.
- Almost all pupils are highly engaged, very enthusiastic learners who are eager to share their accomplishments with others. They apply themselves very well to tasks set for them and respond diligently and with good humour to the encouragement of their teachers.
- Pupils go out of their way to be polite as they move around school. They open doors for staff, greet each other and adults extremely courteously and enjoy taking the produce they have grown to share with others in the playground.
- Staff, parents and carers, and pupils said that bullying is extremely rare. Pupils understand the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are confident that the adults in school would deal quickly and effectively with any concerns. The curriculum includes many opportunities for learning about personal safety, so pupils develop a very good understanding and feel safe and secure in school.
- The behaviour mentor works closely with families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and punctually. He follows up absences immediately and effectively. The school also provides many incentives to encourage good attendance and pupils are keen to compete for these. As a result, the school has greatly improved on the poor attendance of previous years, and

attendance is now much closer to average.

- The pupils who have behavioural difficulties are catered for extremely well, because the learning mentor and behaviour mentor both provide nurturing and supportive activities. They ensure that all pupils take part in classroom activities and develop very good personal, social and emotional capabilities. This work includes additional visits to the secondary school to ensure that transitions at the end of Year 6 are as smooth as possible.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher, senior leadership team and governors have high aspirations for the pupils in the school. This vision is shared by all staff.
 - The quality of teaching and learning is checked regularly so that adjustments are made in a timely manner. In response to the dip in attainment in 2012, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior members of staff, including literacy and numeracy coordinators, analysed information carefully and identified gaps in learning. They then took steps to improve teaching and support colleagues so that improvements were secured, although they have not ensured that the very best practice is shared throughout the school.
 - The staff member with responsibility for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that these pupils are identified as quickly as possible and appropriate support is provided for them. She works effectively with outside agencies, provides one-to-one and small-group support, and liaises with class teachers to make sure pupils achieve well.
 - Relationships with parents are very positive. Parents appreciate the work of the school and recognise the commitment of the headteacher and staff to the well-being of the pupils. An 'open door' policy means that parents are always able to talk to teachers or senior managers, so any issues or concerns are resolved quickly and effectively.
 - The curriculum provides pupils with interesting and engaging experiences, and they are involved in suggesting topics and making decisions about their own learning. They have the opportunity to learn to play the ukulele, grow produce in the allotment and raised beds in the playground, and become involved with programmes that build resilience and emotional health and well-being.
 - The local authority arranges a yearly meeting to discuss the quality of education and pupils' attainment, and supports the school when required. It is confident in the school's capacity to meet the needs of the community it serves.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governors are well organised and knowledgeable. They support the school well and check its work effectively through visits and regular opportunities at meetings to ask questions of the headteacher. They also receive regular detailed reports and gather information about pupils' progress from a range of sources so they can see how well the school is doing in comparison with other schools. They make sure that the pupil premium is spent wisely and that pupils benefit from the additional support it provides. Governors oversee the management of the headteacher's performance, and understand clearly how teachers' performance is managed and linked to pay rises and promotion. Governors also make sure that they are suitably trained and that national requirements are met, including those relating to safeguarding.
-

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	112661
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	411959

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Wright
Headteacher	Hilda Smith
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2008
Telephone number	01246 234546
Fax number	01246 275053
Email address	enquiries@spire-jun.derbyshire.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

