

St James Primary School

Great Charles Street, Brownhills, Walsall, WS8 6AE

Inspection dates 3–4 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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:

- Teaching is not consistently good. As a result, too few pupils make good progress and some make less than expected progress.
- The progress that pupils are currently making from Year 1 to Year 6 in English and mathematics is inconsistent and requires improvement.
- Work set for pupils is not always at the right level of challenge. This is especially the case for more-able pupils.
- Teachers do not always make best use of teaching assistants to plan activities to make sure all pupils make consistently good progress in all lessons.
- Teachers' questioning too often requires short answers from pupils, rather than helping them think through and develop the ideas they are learning about.
- Leaders and managers check the quality of teaching in lessons but this has not been sufficiently effective to make sure that teaching helps pupils make consistently good progress.

The school has the following strengths:

- School leaders at all levels, including governors, are ambitious and committed to the school's success.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage makes sure children do well and enjoy their learning experiences.
- The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. The school provides a caring environment and the pupils say they feel safe. As a result, pupils behave well and attend regularly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed seven teachers teach 14 lessons, two ~~several~~ of which were observed jointly with members of the school’s leadership team. In addition, inspectors made several short visits to lessons and observed a number of small groups of pupils taught by teaching assistants.
- Inspectors heard children read from Years 2 and 6 and also held meetings with two groups of pupils including the school council.
- Inspectors spoke to the members of the governing body including the vice chair, members of the school management team and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s work, and at a range of documents, including school improvement plans, achievement data on pupils’ current progress and documents relating to safeguarding children.
- Questionnaires were analysed from 14 members of staff.
- There was a very low ~~zero~~ response to the online questionnaire Parent View, however inspectors used the start of the day to talk to parents and carers.

Inspection team

Sarah Jones , Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St James Primary School is a smaller-than-average size primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average and those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school shares its site with a children's centre. This is inspected separately.
- The school has a number of recent awards including Basic Skills Quality Mark, Walsall Anti-Bullying Silver Award and Walsall Accreditation for Accurate Levelling of Writing.
- The school provides a breakfast club as well as after-school clubs that include games such as indoor football.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - setting work that is at the right level for all pupils and that challenges the more-able pupils
 - checking pupils' work more often during lessons to see if they are making good or better progress in both English and mathematics
 - using better questioning to challenge and deepen pupils' understanding of their learning
 - making sure teachers make the best use of teaching assistants in all lessons, particularly in whole-class situations, to make the most of learning for all pupils
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers by making sure that:
 - all leaders check the quality of teaching and learning to promote good pupil progress within their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 has been slow over time. Observations of teaching and a review of pupils' work in their books show that although progress has improved, it is still variable across the year groups including by the end of Year 6.
- Over the last three years, pupils' attainment in mathematics and English has fluctuated across classes, which reflects the inconsistent teaching and uneven use of available data to promote learning.
- Children start the school with skills and knowledge at below the levels expected for their age, especially in language and communication. As a result of good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage children do well and they enter Year 1 just a little below average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to other pupils' because of the amendments to activities to help them. This still requires improvement, however.
- There is no gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and the others in the school, as attainment and progress for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are similar to the others'.
- Pupils enjoy reading and use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to help read more difficult words. Year 6 pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their visit to the local community library, to which the school has introduced regular visits to help raise standards in reading.
- During a work scrutiny there was evidence of pupils making better progress than before, with teachers providing supportive comments and next steps to help improve their learning further.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in Years 1 to 6 requires improvement. Teachers do not always set work that is at the right level for the different abilities in the class.
- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it still requires improvement as too many lessons do not help pupils learn fast enough by maintaining a brisk pace. Teachers do not always make sure pupils' learning is secure by using probing questioning to help them develop their ideas further. Some teachers are not checking pupils' progress and understanding sufficiently in all areas, including in English and mathematics.
- Where teaching is good, the tasks are well matched to the pupils' abilities. This was seen in a Year 4 literacy lesson on the *Iron Man* by Ted Hughes. The pupils were aware of their targets and knew what they were required to do to achieve higher grades. They made good use of the resources available to support their progress in the lesson.
- Teaching assistants are well respected by pupils for their help and the support they are given. While teachers use support staff well when they are working with small groups of pupils and individuals, they do not always make best use of them in whole-class situations.
- In the better lessons, key skills involving reading, writing and mathematics are promoted well. Good evidence of this was in science books including an experiment about floatation and friction.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Activities are well planned and interesting to make sure that children make good progress.
- The relationships in lessons are exceptionally positive, pupils have respect for each other and celebrate each other's achievements. This was also observed in an assembly, which focused on the celebration of pupils' achievements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are keen to learn and behave well in and around the school.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and almost all work hard.
- The school has a warm welcoming atmosphere and the pupils report they feel safe.
- The relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are good.
- Pupils' behaviour outside the classroom during break and lunchtimes is good, as they show respect towards each other.
- Behaviour is managed well by all staff including lunchtime supervisors, within the dining room, outside or in classrooms where pupils are able to engage in a range of activities such as quiet reading or games.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and are clear what to do if they have any concerns. They know that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Pupils have experiences of taking responsibility as members of the school council or acting as play leaders to support other children during break time.
- The schools' effort to work closely with families is helping as pupils attend school regularly, persistent absence has been reduced and the attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with that of all pupils nationally.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because some pupils lose focus when work is not set at the right level for them.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because good teaching and consistency in pupils' progress are not yet secure.
- The headteacher has faced challenging times to make sure she has the right staff in school to raise standards. The school is improving through the actions being taken by leadership and management. Leaders are making sure that the school promotes quality of opportunity for all groups of pupils.
- A much improved system for checking pupils' progress has been introduced and is used well by both senior and other leaders, but it is not yet used skilfully by all classroom teachers.
- The school has adopted a process of regular and systematic observations and this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, although at times there is not enough consistency in the teaching between year groups.
- The school development plan is based on an analysis of the strengths and areas for development across the school. Changes to address the quality of provision in English and mathematics are leading to improvements. However, this plan has not been fully carried out.
- The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its broad topic-based curriculum, as well as promoting family visits. On a recent visit to the Natural History Museum in London, 72 children and family members attended, many of whom had never been to London before. The primary school sport funding will be used to buy in sports coaches to promote and teach physical education across the school. This is designed to increase healthiness and improve pupils' well-being. The plans include steps to measure their effectiveness.
- Internal and external partnerships are valued by the school. The school has strong links with the children's centre next door as well as with local secondary schools and churches.
- The management of teachers' performance has been and is well structured. It shows a good link between improving the quality of teaching, the national Teachers' Standards and training to meet the identified needs of teachers.
- The local authority has helped the school by providing effective wide-ranging support including checking the school's work, which has particularly strengthened leadership and management, as well as providing support to raise standards in mathematics and English.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has an understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development within the context of the school and the community it serves and the needs of the pupils, in relation to similar schools. The governing body is clear on the targets for the school and how these can be met. This includes the use of data and how it informs teachers' planning to raise attainment in all classes. Governors know about the quality of teaching and what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. They make sure that statutory responsibilities are met, such as safeguarding requirements being fully in place and effective. Governors have a good understanding of the school including the management of teachers' performance and the implementation of the national Teachers' Standards and how they affect salary progression. Governors monitor spending carefully and are aware of how the school is using the pupil premium funding to improve 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	131581
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	427014

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Collis
Headteacher	Helen Pearcey
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 January 2012
Telephone number	01543 452328
Fax number	01543 362049
Email address	postbox@st-james.walsall.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

