

# St John's CofE (C) Primary School

Quarry Bank Road, Keele, Newcastle, ST5 5AF

**Inspection dates** 23–24 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good and pupils are well prepared for secondary school.
- Children make good progress in the Reception class, where they benefit from a wide mix of exciting work.
- Pupils continue to make good progress as they move up the school. They reach above-average standards when they leave school in Year 6.
- Good teaching provides pupils with work that is interesting, relevant and challenging.
- Pupils are very happy and feel very safe in school. Their behaviour in class and around the school is good. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy taking responsibility.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching are frequent and rigorous. Plans and staff training to improve the school have been successful. The school is well placed to improve even further.
- The governing body provides a good level of challenge and support to the headteacher and staff. It makes sure that that the school meets all legal requirements.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress sometimes slows when teachers do not make the best use of their checks on learning to change lesson plans to sustain a fast rate of learning.
- Progress in mathematics is not as rapid as it is in English because the ability of some pupils to solve mathematical problems is a relative weakness.
- Older pupils are not really sure of their long-term targets and do not take enough responsibility for their own rate of progress.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed the teaching in all classes. They visited 14 lessons taught by seven teachers as well as sessions for small groups of pupils led by teaching assistants. The headteacher joined them for some of these visits.
- The inspectors held discussions with pupils, the headteacher, other teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at a range of evidence, including records of pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation, behaviour logs and the results of the school's checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the work in pupils' books.
- The views of 35 parents, analysed through the Parent View website, were considered. The inspectors also took account of the views of eight parents with whom they talked at the school gate and the views of several parents who wrote e-mails to them.

## Inspection team

Gerald Griffin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janis Warren

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St John's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The remainder come from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Improve teaching by making sure that the checks on the rate of learning during a lesson are consistently used effectively to reshape plans to sustain a fast rate of progress.
- Improve progress in mathematics by strengthening pupils' understanding of how to solve mathematical problems for those who find this difficult.
- Make sure older pupils are clear about their long-term targets so that they can take a higher level of personal responsibility for their progress towards them.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age. Children make good progress in the Reception class to reach above-average attainment in all areas of learning. More-able children do particularly well. For example, by the time they start Year 1 they can write interesting short sentences using a wide range of vocabulary and accurate spelling and punctuation.
- In 2013, pupils left school at the end of Year 6 with above-average attainment, as they have every year since the last inspection. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is also above average.
- The attainment of boys in Year 6, which has been behind that of the girls for the past few years, has risen so that boys and girls reach similar standards in reading and mathematics. The gap in writing is closing quickly. This is because the school's plans to provide work that better appeals to boys have been successful.
- Pupils make better than expected progress in Years 1 to 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in Year 6 is similar in these subjects. In other years, progress in mathematics is good but not as rapid as it is in English. This is because, for some pupils, the skills needed to solve mathematical problems are not very well developed.
- Pupils enjoy reading and do so regularly. Pupils' phonic skills (linking letters to the sounds they make) are well developed. The phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2013 showed pupils' skills to be above the national average, an improvement on the previous year's average outcome.
- More-able pupils make good progress throughout the school. For example, all those who left the Reception class with above-average attainment in 2011 reached the higher levels in the Key Stage 1 tests in 2013.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs work hard in lessons. They make similar progress to their peers because of good teaching by well-qualified adults who know their needs well.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is very small and it is not appropriate to report on their individual attainment. The inspection looked closely at their progress in English and mathematics and found this to be as rapid as their classmates. This shows the school uses the pupil premium money effectively.
- Older pupils are not really clear about the long-term targets which teachers expect them to achieve. This means they find it hard to judge their own rate of progress over time, and this limits the opportunity they have to take responsibility for reaching them.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is nearly always good and, in some lesson, it is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations. They plan work, including homework, that stretches pupils and deepens their knowledge and understanding. Teachers' questions are challenging and demand extended

responses.

- Work that teachers plan is relevant and engaging and, as a result, relationships are most positive, pupils enjoy lessons and work hard.
- In the Reception class, teachers plan an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-chosen activities that cover all the areas of learning. Children mostly have clear challenging targets for their work and work well independently and with other children. Teaching prepares children well for more formal learning in Year 1. In lessons seen during the inspection, the outdoor learning area was under-used.
- Staff in the Reception class make good use of regular and accurate assessments of each child's skills to plan challenging next steps in their learning. Their assessments of the standards attained at the end of the year have recently been independently verified.
- Teachers plan many opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. For example, older pupils have a good understanding of different religions. In discussions with an inspector, they reflected maturely on the differences between culture and religion.
- Teaching assistants give valuable support, especially to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium. For example, they keep notes on pupils' progress, which are used by the teacher for future planning.
- Marking has improved and gives pupils a very clear understanding of how they can make their work even better.
- Typically, there is a brisk pace to learning. Occasionally, pupils' progress slows when, for example, teachers do not make best use of pupils' answers to decide if they can move on to more difficult work or if more time is needed to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding.

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

- Pupils feel extremely safe in school. Their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe is highly developed. For example, older pupils know about how to keep themselves safe on the internet.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and this is confirmed by the views of pupils and the school's behaviour logs.
- Bullying is almost unheard of, and pupils are confident that staff would resolve any incidents effectively. Older pupils understand its different forms, such as cyber-bullying, and how to respond to them. Pupils feel very well looked after and supported by adults.
- Attendance is above average this term as it has been over recent years. This reflects pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- Pupils enjoy assessing their own work and that of a partner. This means they share good ideas, which they use to make their work better. This confident collaborative work contributes well to their gaining independence.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning. They need little or no supervision when they are

working independently. They ask teachers demanding questions to make sure their work is of a high standard.

- Pupils are keen to accept responsibilities. In the Reception class, children take responsibility for collecting the resources they need for their chosen activities. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility, too, as playground buddies and as members of the school council.

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

- The headteacher, other school leaders and the governing body aim high and set the school challenging targets.
- Leaders of the Reception class have successfully trained teaching assistants in the skills of accurately assessing children's capabilities and planning work in all areas of learning.
- Teaching is improving because leaders make rigorous checks on teaching and the quality of learning. The follow-up actions from these observations successfully tackle any weaknesses and improve teachers' skills. For example, successful training has improved the way teachers plan work so that it appeals to both boys and girls.
- The school has made good use of support from the local authority and consultants, especially in developing the skills of the governing body.
- The way subjects are taught strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, the school provides many opportunities for pupils to reflect on right and wrong, their feelings and respect for others.
- Pupils have two lessons of physical education a week that they thoroughly enjoy. These make an important contribution to their healthy physical development. Leaders have firm plans for spending the new primary school sports funding. For example, it will be used to improve the teaching of physical education, pay for coaches to broaden the range of after-school sports clubs and increase pupils' participation in school games.
- Most parents expressed positive views about their children's progress, the quality of teaching and leadership of the school. The school provides courses for parents, for example in the way mathematics is taught, so that parents can support their children's education at home.
- Leaders have a very clear commitment to combating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity. This is shown in the good progress made by all groups of pupils from all backgrounds. The school fosters excellent relationships with outside agencies and other schools to improve pupils' life chances even more.
- School leaders at all levels are always thinking ahead so that they can make the school even better. For example, they have already introduced plans to provide more time for pupils to practise problem solving in mathematics. It is too early to judge their success.
- Child protection training for staff is thorough, and leaders implement child protection policies rigorously. The school completes all statutory checks on the suitability of staff to be employed.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has an accurate picture of how well the school is doing compared with

other schools through their regular visits to see the school at work and their clear understanding of data on pupils' progress. They use this information well to ask the school searching questions about its performance. For example, they are taking a keen interest in progress in mathematics. The governing body has a strong focus on staff training and is keen to improve its own skills. Governors check that the management of teachers' performance is rigorous. Only those teachers that have met the challenging targets set by the school, including those for pupils' progress, are considered for pay increases and promotion. Governors make sure that the school is spending the pupil premium funding on those eligible for it and that it brings benefits through higher 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124254
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	428115

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Francis Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth McAvan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 May 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 296000
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