

# Knutton St Mary's CE (VC) Primary School

Church Lane, Knutton, Newcastle, ST5 6EB

## Inspection dates

23–24 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Pupils' progress is uneven because the quality of teaching is inconsistent and not enough is good.
- In some lessons teachers do not match work sufficiently well to pupils' abilities, so their attitudes to learning and behaviour deteriorate and require improvement.
- Sometimes pupils have to sit and listen to the teachers' explanations for too long when higher-ability pupils could be getting on with more challenging work.
- Achievement in reading and writing is held back by weaknesses in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics).
- Pupils do not get enough chance to apply and develop their numeracy skills in different subjects.
- The comments teachers make when they mark pupils' work do not always show clearly how to improve it.
- Teachers do not always use teaching assistants fully to support pupils' learning.
- Targets set for teachers to improve their work are not linked closely enough to the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- Not all of the staff who lead subjects and other aspects of the school have the skills needed to bring about improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Some members of the governing body lack the skills needed to gather evidence of the school's performance so they can take action to improve it.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is providing staff with clear direction for improving the school.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is good.
- Pupils generally behave well around the school, and parents say they feel safe and secure.
- School leadership is benefiting from the support of the local authority.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons. Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The headteacher also joined the inspectors in reviewing pupils' work.
- Inspectors also observed the breakfast club and two assemblies, and made a number of short visits to classrooms.
- Pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. They also met with a representative of the local authority and some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Groups of pupils of different ages were heard reading.
- Inspectors took account of 23 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to be analysed.
- They looked at the school's policies, teachers' plans, samples of pupils' work, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety. Inspectors also looked at information on individual pupils' progress and teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.

## Inspection team

Kenneth Thomas, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Linda Brown	Additional Inspector
Michael Onyon	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This is a below-average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is high. This is additional government funding for particular groups such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school provides a breakfast club that is managed by the governing body.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2013.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by making sure that:
  - teachers' explanations are not too long, so pupils have more time to develop their independent learning skills
  - teachers show higher expectations by consistently setting work that provides pupils with the right level of challenge
  - more effective use is made of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning
  - the marking of pupils' work provides clear guidance on the standard of the work and how it can be improved, and pupils respond to the advice given.
- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
  - all staff have the skills needed to teach letters and sounds (phonics) effectively
  - pupils have more opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects
  - pupils are provided with more opportunities to apply and develop their knowledge of number facts and calculation skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - providing teachers with opportunities to observe good and outstanding practice so that they can improve their teaching
  - linking teachers' targets explicitly to desired improvements in pupils' progress
  - developing the skills of leaders at all levels so they are able to check and improve the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility
  - making sure that all governors have the knowledge and skills needed to systematically challenge leaders and help them improve the school's performance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' good progress in Years 5 and 6 does not fully make up for slower progress in other years. As a result, they do not reach the standards of which they are capable. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing.
- Most children start in Nursery with skills and abilities that are generally well below those typical for children of their age. Although children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes in their personal and social development, progress in language and number skills is slower because teaching does not focus sharply enough on improving these skills.
- Improvements in teaching and better use of assessment to set pupils learning targets are improving pupils' progress. This was apparent in the results of the tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2012 and 2013, which showed that most pupils had made the progress expected nationally during their time in the school. This was largely because pupils made good progress in Years 5 and 6, where there is more good teaching.
- Although most pupils now make the progress expected, not enough make the more rapid progress needed to raise standards quickly. Reviews of pupils' work in English, mathematics and other subjects shows that they are not always given tasks that are suitably challenging, particularly those of higher ability.
- Progress in reading and writing is slowed because of weaknesses in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and because pupils are not encouraged to write at length across a range of subjects. Not enough pupils reached the required standard in the national Year 1 phonics screening test.
- Pupils' skills in calculation and their knowledge of number facts, and their ability to apply these to solve mathematical problems, are not developing as quickly as they need to because they are not given enough opportunities to apply and develop these skills in different subjects.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that of their classmates. Specialist support helps pupils who have a statement of educational needs to achieve successfully.
- There is no significant difference between the attainment and progress of pupils supported by the pupil premium and other groups. In common with their classmates, in Year 6 these pupils are on average about six months behind pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and 18 months behind in writing.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- While there are a number of strengths in teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, its quality is too variable to ensure that pupils make good overall progress as they move through the school.
- Where teaching requires improvement or is occasionally inadequate, teachers do not expect enough from the pupils and tend to give the same work to all pupils without regard for different ability levels. As a result the work is too easy for some pupils, but too hard for others.

- In some lessons, pupils of all abilities are required to sit and listen to lengthy explanations of what they are to do next, when higher ability pupils in particular are capable of moving on more quickly. When this occurs some pupils become disengaged and progress suffers because they become less enthusiastic learners.
- The teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Some staff do not have a good enough understanding of how letters and sounds should be taught, and do not provide pupils with a secure base on which to develop their reading and writing skills.
- The expectations communicated through the marking of pupils' work are not high enough. Too much poorly presented work is not challenged. Marking is also not always clear or detailed enough. Where pupils are given guidance on what to do to improve their work, they are not always given enough time to follow it through and learn from correcting their own mistakes.
- The most effective teaching occurs where learning is well planned and the teacher makes clear exactly what pupils are expected to learn. For example, in a mathematics lesson with Year 5 pupils, good progress was made in developing a systematic approach to solving number problems because the work was carefully planned to challenge and extend the learning of pupils of all ability levels. All worked with enthusiasm because the work engaged and interested them.
- Where the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is most successful, teachers use teaching assistants well to support individuals and small groups. In less effective situations, teaching assistants are passive because teachers talk for too long, and this limits the time pupils have for independent work.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****requires improvement**

- While pupils' social behaviour is often good and they behave well towards staff and one another, their attitudes to learning are not as well developed.
- In lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are too variable and too dependent on how good teaching is. For example, in lessons where pupils are required to listen to lengthy explanations, or learning is not made interesting enough, individuals become inattentive and less motivated.
- Most pupils are polite and helpful to adults in school. They were very happy to talk to inspectors about their work. Pupils willingly take on responsibility through, for example, the school council or their work as school prefects. The breakfast club is well supervised and provides pupils with a welcoming and nourishing start to the day.
- Pupils report that they feel safe, secure and happy in school. The parents and carers spoken to agreed. Pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to stay safe and are knowledgeable about risk and danger. They say that while there have been instances of bullying in the past, they are not aware of any current issues. They were confident that there was an adult they could approach if they had any concerns.
- Attendance has improved and is currently close to average, having been below average in the last school year.

**The leadership and management****requires improvement**

- Following the appointment of the new headteacher, leadership and management are in

transition. The headteacher has rightly prioritised checking the quality of teaching and learning. Weaknesses are being identified and an agenda set to raise achievement. For example, a new programme is to be introduced to ensure a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. The actions being taken to raise standards and the improvement seen in pupils' achievement in 2012 and 2013 show that the school has the capacity to improve.

- Procedures for holding teachers to account for pupils' progress have recently been strengthened. There is now a clear understanding that all decisions on pay rises and promotion must be fully justified by teachers' success in ensuring pupils make good progress. However, the targets set for teachers to improve their work are not linked closely enough to measurable improvements in pupils' progress.
- Staff who have subject or other leadership roles do not always evaluate accurately the impact of teaching on pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. This has slowed the rate of improvement in teaching and learning. With good support from the local authority, firm plans are being made to provide leaders and teachers with training and opportunities to observe best practice to help them achieve their targets.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development runs through most areas of school life. In assemblies, pupils sing together enthusiastically, worship and are encouraged to reflect on moral issues.
- The curriculum is enriched by a range of clubs and visits which assist pupils' learning and their personal development. For example, during the inspection Year 6 pupils were engaged in a Second World War day in which they enjoyed a performance by a theatre group and at lunchtime were joined by parents and carers and provided with a typical lunch from the period. Such activities broaden pupils' outlook and develop their self-confidence.
- The school is using the new primary sports funding well, with a clear focus on competitive sport and the use of specialist sports coaches. It has appropriate plans to measure the impact of this spending.
- The pupil premium has been used sensibly to provide additional support to fill gaps in learning for eligible pupils, for example in reading, and also to strengthen links with parents and carers, particularly those who may be hard to reach. This work is particularly beneficial for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, and reflects the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are very supportive and fully committed to ensuring the school's future success. However, in the past they have paid too little attention to exploring the reasons for variation in pupils' achievement and how this links to strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They now have a better understanding of the need to challenge underperformance and reward teachers who are successfully raising achievement. However, they have not had enough training to gain the skills needed to fully hold leaders to account for the school's performance. Governors manage funding conscientiously and ensure that the pupil premium is spent to raise the attainment of pupils for whom it is intended. However, they are less secure in their understanding of impact of the spending on pupils' progress. Governors ensure that their duties are met, including those relating to safeguarding of pupils, and that all necessary checks are carried out to ensure pupils' safety.

## 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>	133993
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427018

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	270
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susan Newman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Charlotte Beltran
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 January 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 297337
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