

The John Bamford Primary School

Crabtree Way, Etching Hill, Rugeley, WS15 2PA

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The school leadership’s determination and drive have successfully improved teaching and learning since the previous inspection.
- Standards are rising as a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching and pupils achieve well. In the pupils’ words, ‘teachers make learning fun in this school’.
- The practice of bringing different subjects together in ‘adventures’ fosters a love of learning and a sense of wonderment in pupils as they find additional things out for themselves.
- Pupils feel safe and well-cared for. They are proud of how well they are doing. They appreciate the ‘tickets to success’ that show them how to get better and better.
- The pupils’ good behaviour ensures that learning proceeds uninterrupted in lessons and that play and lunchtimes are happy, social occasions.
- Governors know the school well. They monitor its work and challenge it to do even better. They use training opportunities effectively to give them the skills to do these things.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to enable pupils in all year groups to make rapid progress at all times.
- Teachers do not have enough opportunities to observe and learn from the best practice in the school.
- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write at length in literacy or in ‘adventures’ sessions.
- Pupils do not know their tables or number facts well enough to help them calculate rapidly in mathematics.
- School improvement and subject action planning does not focus sufficiently on outcomes for the pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 28 lessons. Five of the observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Play and lunchtimes were observed and discussions were held with pupils, governors, staff, and a representative of the local authority.
- The views of 40 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. Parents' views were also obtained informally at the start of the school day.
- The team took account of the 15 questionnaires completed by staff at the school.
- Inspectors looked closely at a wide range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, the school's improvement plan, subject action plans, the school's self-evaluation document and records and policies relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also scrutinised teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books, observed sessions where pupils were learning to link letters and sounds (phonics) and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Westall	Additional Inspector
Deirdre Lyddy	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and/or speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding, known as the pupil premium, is below average. In this school the funding is for children in local authority care and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, who are supported through school action, is average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been several staff changes since the previous inspection, including at management level.
- Privately-run before- and after-school clubs, and a pre-school group known as the 'JB Tots', operate on the school premises. They are inspected separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Encourage a greater proportion of outstanding teaching in all year groups by:
 - giving teachers the opportunity to observe and learn from the outstanding practice already evident in parts of the school.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - building more opportunities for pupils to complete extended pieces of writing into literacy lessons and other subjects
 - increasing pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables and sharpening their ability to recall mathematical facts rapidly
 - ensuring they respond promptly to the guidance they receive when teachers mark their work.
- Incorporate quantifiable targets relating to pupil performance into the school improvement and subject action plans so that progress towards priorities can be more easily measured.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Nursery with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in language and number. Progress has improved in this age group since the previous inspection and is now good. As a result, children are well-prepared for their work in Year 1.
- Pupils enjoy reading, and they read well. Pupils in Year 1 did well in the phonics screening in 2013 and, when inspectors heard them reading, used these skills effectively to read tricky or unfamiliar words. Boys' reading is improving because the school has ensured that the range of texts offered appeal to boys as well as girls.
- Results in Year 6 fell slightly in 2013 but have generally been above average in English and mathematics over time. More-able pupils make good progress overall. The dip in overall results and in the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in 2013 was reflected in the learning difficulties experienced by a number of pupils in that particular year group.
- Year 6 pupils did well in the grammar, spelling and punctuation test, which was new in 2013. Pupils present their work well but their ability to write at length varies from class to class. Although pupils use their writing skills well in 'adventure' work, they are not expected to write at length often enough.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and they understand its importance in everyday life. Nevertheless, their progress is sometimes limited because they do not know their times tables or number facts well enough to enable them to calculate rapidly.
- The school ensure pupils receiving the additional pupil premium make good progress and that any gaps between their attainment and other pupils are closing. In 2013, there was hardly any difference in mathematics, compared with a gap of over two terms nationally. In reading and writing, the gaps were just over one term, compared with over two terms nationally. The additional funding for these pupils is used effectively to support individual and small group teaching. All support programmes are kept under constant review to ensure they are working.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make the same good progress as other pupils. Skilled teaching and support staff attend to the pupils' needs with clear targets and individualised programmes that are constantly checked to ensure their effectiveness.
- The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching enthuses and inspires pupils because learning is well-planned to match their different needs and allow them to pursue some of their own interests. For example, in one lesson where Year 4 pupils were studying the Vikings, they used their literacy, numeracy and computer skills effectively to research different information, which they then shared with others. Pupils benefit from additional booster classes that also involve the headteacher or teachers from local high schools.
- Reading is taught well and teachers use many different methods to help pupils learn. In most lessons, they constantly check and adjust learning in response to how well pupils are doing.

They teach pupils how to assess their own work and how to help others improve theirs. This was noted in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils suggested how others could improve the role play that was helping them to understand characters in a story.

- Learning is made real for pupils so that they can see the relevance of it. Their good subject knowledge enables teachers to question, probe and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a series of outstanding Year 6 sessions, pupils were given an excellent range of well-prepared resources, and very effective questioning and discussion enabled pupils to understand the plot in a Shakespeare play, relate it to modern life and conclude that the plays are accessible to primary school pupils.
- Pupils who qualify for the pupil premium funding are spread across groups according to their ability. Teachers and well-briefed support staff help these pupils, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, to make good progress by breaking their learning into the smaller steps they need to take to experience success.
- Pupils' work is usually marked well, with guidance on how it can be improved. Pupils respond by doing corrections but not always straight away. This sometimes limits the effectiveness of the guidance they are offered. Nevertheless, pupils know their targets and appreciate the 'tickets to success' that help them understand the next steps to take.
- Children are taught well in Nursery and Reception, indoors and out, thus ensuring their good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Children settle quickly in Nursery and reception. As in the rest of the school, start-of-day learning activities set the scene and put them in the mood for learning. Virtually all pupils develop good independent skills alongside learning to work well together in pairs and groups.
- Pupils very much appreciate how staff encourage them to learn, saying, for example, that their 'teacher is passionate about reading and learning and therefore so are we'. Pupils accept, trust and respect each other and adults, regardless of background or culture. They state confidently that 'everyone fits in in this school'.
- Pupils understand how their good behaviour and positive attitudes in lessons and around the school help their learning. The school is vigilant about teaching pupils to keep themselves safe, including when using computers, and particularly social networking sites, as well as cameras and mobile phones. Bullying incidents are very rare but pupils know what to do should they know of or experience any. They are confident that staff will always help them should they have concerns of any kind.
- All parents spoken to during the inspection were very satisfied with what the school does for their children and for them. They said that their children were safe, happy and made good progress, and confirmed that staff, including the headteacher, always made themselves available to them. Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate the negative responses from a small minority of parents that were submitted to the Ofsted online questionnaire.
- Attendance is average. Although it has improved recently, a small number of persistent absentees hold it down. The school is doing everything possible, including involving external agencies, to impress on the pupils and their parents the importance of regular attendance and the impact of any absence on pupils' progress.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's vision and drive have kept the school firmly on the road to improvement since the previous inspection. She has successfully established effective teamwork among staff and governors, all of whom share her vision to make the school outstanding.
- Leaders and managers at different levels fulfil their roles well because the headteacher enables them to do so. The responsibilities given to leaders of different combinations of year groups ensure pupils make a smooth transition from one phase and year to the next and helps them move confidently on to the High School.
- Staff readily respond to the support and guidance they receive as part of the rigorous management of their performance. Well-considered professional development opportunities help them to improve further, although best practices in teaching from within the school are not shared widely enough.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and well-evidenced. It is securely based on information gained from the meticulous tracking of pupils' progress, an in-depth analysis of data, and the outcomes of the systematic monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Leaders set ambitious targets for pupils and staff and work hard to ensure they are met. The school improvement and subject action plans help to keep it on track. However, in these plans, the steps to success do not include quantifiable data to enable the school to measure the impact of these plans on pupils' outcomes.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is managed well as is the provision for children in Nursery and Reception, enabling all such pupils to make good progress.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted well in all subjects, particularly through the 'adventure' approach that makes learning enjoyable. However, pupils are given insufficient or only irregular opportunities to practise writing at length so that they can take this aspect of their writing further.
- Visits and visitors and well-attended clubs are used effectively as springboards for structuring work across all subjects. Excellent use of outdoors for Forest Schools and physical education also contributes to the pupils' good progress, as do the many opportunities pupils have to learn in and through the arts.
- Safeguarding procedures, including for child protection, meet the government's current requirements and all training is up to date. The school tackles discrimination effectively, ensuring equality of opportunity for all. Work in different subjects and links with other schools give pupils an understanding of cultures beyond their own.
- The local authority proves an appropriate level of support for this improving school. It is confident in its capacity to improve further, as is the inspection team.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school well. They support and challenge it in equal measure and have a good understanding of data relating to pupils' progress and attainment. They gain their information from visits, meetings with relevant staff, and from accompanying the headteacher as she monitors teaching and learning. They have sharpened their skills through training, and

help the headteacher to make decisions about pay based on staff performance. They also support her in tackling underperformance. They check the impact of all spending, including pupil premium funding, and make sure it is helping to improve pupils' progress. They have made sensible decisions about the use of the primary schools sports funding to widen the range of sporting activities available to the pupils and to raise staff expertise in the teaching of physical education.

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	124171
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	426996

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Carter
Headteacher	Louise Thomas Burns
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2011
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