

Waterhouses CofE (C) Primary School

Waterfall Lane, Waterhouses, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 3HY

Inspection dates 3–4 December 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.

- At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment has gone from being significantly below the national average in 2011 to significantly above it in 2013.
- Pupils of all ages achieve well. The very large majority make at least expected progress and a considerable proportion do even better.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, such as those who have special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium funding, also make good progress overall.
- Teaching is good overall and ensures that pupils achieve well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Pupils are very well known by adults within the school and enjoy excellent relationships with them. This helps feel very safe and secure.
- Attendance is above average and pupils thrive in the school's nurturing environment.
- The headteacher's drive and determination are key to the school's improvement and success. She has a strategic and systematic approach to building on the school's strengths and tackling areas that could be better. She is developing other leaders well.
- The governing body has a strong understanding of its role and is taking effective action to ensure it carries out its responsibilities well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good overall, it is not consistently good in all lessons.
- Teachers do not always make sure that work has the right level of difficulty for all pupils.
- Pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work require improvement.
- Teachers do not always make full use of information about individual pupils' attainment and progress to take all possible steps to close any gaps between them and others, such as between some boys and girls.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine parts of lessons, some of which were conducted jointly with the headteacher and several other visits to classrooms were made. The inspector looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the headteacher and other leaders, and members of the governing body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of parents' views, including the 18 parents who made their views known on-line at Parent View, those who requested a conversation and the results of surveys carried out by the school.
- Documents were scrutinised, including information relating to pupils' progress and attendance, performance management, minutes of governing body meetings and monitoring and evaluation records.

Inspection team

Joan McKenna, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Waterhouses is a much smaller than the average sized primary school. Pupils are taught in three classes, a Nursery/Reception class, a Year 1/2 class and a Year 3/4 class. At the moment there are no Year 5 or Year 6 pupils on roll due to parents choosing to transfer their children at the end of Year 4 to the middle school in the area. It is anticipated that some current Year 4 pupils will remain in the school until the end of Year 6.
- Almost all pupils are from White British Backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average. These proportions vary considerably in different year groups.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after. Again, the proportion varies across different year groups, with no such pupils in some year groups.
- The government floor standard, which sets out the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, is not applicable to this school as there were no Year 6 pupils last year.
- The school has experienced some instability in staffing in the past year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better, so that it ensures all pupils learn and achieve equally well in all lessons, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use information about pupils' attainment and progress to make sure that work is not too easy or too hard for all ability groups
 - teachers take additional steps in lessons to specifically help those for whom there are gaps between them and other pupils, and especially to close the gap between boys and girls
 - pupils are encouraged to find things out for themselves in lessons
 - further action is taken to tackle any specific shortcomings on the part of individual teachers so that all improve to the standard of the best.
- Improve pupils' writing by:
 - ensuring that their handwriting and the presentation of their work in all subjects are of a high standard.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The small numbers of pupils in year groups and the different profile of each year group mean that statistics about achievement need to be interpreted with caution.
- Individual children's attainment on entry to the school varies considerably, as does the overall attainment on entry for different year groups. From their individual starting points, the very large majority of pupils make at least the progress expected in all key stages including the Early Years Foundation Stage. A considerable proportion makes more than expected progress across the school.
- As a result of improved rates of progress over the past three years, attainment has risen rapidly. All pupils reached a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in 2013. The proportion of pupils meeting the required standard in the check about linking sounds and letters (phonics) taken at the end of Year 1 in 2013 was above the proportion that did so nationally. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013 was significantly above the national figures, with a marked rise in outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment is also rising in Years 3 and 4.
- Although attainment in writing overall has risen, pupils' handwriting is not of a good standard and this affects the presentation of their work across subjects.
- The numbers of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding or who have special educational needs is small, and there is some overlap between the two groups. The school has put a range of effective interventions in place to support these pupils and those in both groups, make good progress. Although some gaps between some of these pupils and others remain, especially for pupils who are in both groups, these gaps are closing and some individuals are among the highest attaining pupils.
- Although some boys reach the same levels of attainment as girls, overall boys' attainment is not as high as for girls, despite the good progress made by most. Closing this gender gap has been identified as a priority by the school. Nevertheless, the good progress overall and the fact that gaps that exist between groups are narrowing shows that the school is promoting equal opportunities well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall and this has contributed to more rapid progress over time. The well-planned range of additional interventions for those pupils with particular needs have also played their part.
- In all classrooms, adults have warm and supportive relationships with pupils and this helps to motivate pupils to work hard and try to do their best.

Strong features of teaching were seen in the best lessons, some of which showed outstanding practice. In these cases, teachers identify exactly what pupils need to learn and explain this very clearly to them so that they know what they are doing and why. Work is well planned to ensure that activities have the right level of difficulty for all ability groups. Teachers explain to pupils what success will look like for these different groups. In these lessons teachers keep a very close eye on how well pupils are learning and make any necessary adjustments to help pupils'

understand their work better, resulting in good or better progress.

- On the few occasions, when teaching is not as strong, work is not at the right level of challenge for some pupils. When it is too low some pupils lose motivation, and when it is too high some lose confidence. As the lesson progresses, teachers do not always make sure that the work is suitably adapted in response to this mismatch, resulting in gaps in pupils learning, as well as gaps between groups of learners, particularly between boys and girls.
- Pupils are not always equipped to work on their own such as by using letters on display to help with their writing, or to use a dictionary to find the meaning of an unknown word.
- Overall, reading is well taught and pupils are becoming confident, fluent readers who enjoy books. A recent focus on improving mathematics teaching, including promoting an investigative approach, has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and outcomes. While some aspects of writing are well taught, this is not the case in relation to handwriting.
- Marking provides pupils with detailed guidance on how to improve their work, and pupils are starting to improve their work in light of the teachers' comments.
- Teaching assistants often make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. For example, some very effective, probing questioning of two boys in the Early Years Foundation Stage was significantly helping to develop their understanding of number and their use of associated vocabulary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are very proud of their school. They feel valued as individuals and in turn value the efforts that adults make on their behalf. They enjoy being able to recognise acts of kindness by other pupils, as shown in their eager contributions to the 'gold box'. The warm, supportive, caring environment in this small school helps pupils to feel secure and confident.
- Pupils make a valuable contribution to school life through their own conduct and, for some, by taking on roles such as school councillors and play leaders.
- Misbehaviour is rare and pupils try hard, and in the main successfully, to meet the school's expectations of them. The effective teaching helps to ensure good levels of attention and application in lessons. Even on the occasions when they are not being fully equipped to learn well, most nevertheless continue to try their best, although there can be some slight loss of concentration or confidence on the part of a minority.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep safe, including when using the internet. They also have a clear understanding of different kinds of bullying, citing, for example, emotional and cyber bullying. They are unequivocal that bullying is not tolerated within school.
- Attendance is above the national average and has been for some years, which is a further indicator of pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is single-minded in her desire to ensure that the school provides the best for its

pupils. She has worked with evident success to systematically improve the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes since taking up post. She is currently adopting the same degree of determination to minimise the impact of the current staffing issues.

- Improving the skills of other leaders was identified as an area for improvement at the school's previous inspection and this has been well tackled. Subject leaders are now involved in a wider range of activities and take more responsibility for developing their subjects. There are still some areas that require further improvement, such as to ensure that all leaders are fully involved in analysing data about pupils' progress, but this is recognised and is being addressed.
- A wide range of actions to check on the school's effectiveness are carried out and, as a result, the strengths and areas that could be better still are accurately known and well understood. Concerted efforts are made to improve teaching, with much professional development taking place. There are appropriately rigorous links with performance management.
- The curriculum is broad and rich and provides stimulating experiences for pupils. The indoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is vibrant, but the outdoor provision is less so. This has been identified by the school; plans and funding are in hand to improve it.
- The primary school sport funding has been used well and in a way that is promoting sustainable change, such as by developing teachers' skills. A wider range of activities and clubs are offered and more pupils are participating in physical activity and sport, helped by the use of some male sports coaches as role models for boys. The school pays clear attention to promoting healthy lifestyles more generally.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is of a high order, with many examples of its promotion throughout the school. Active steps are being taken to familiarise pupils with a range of cultures which the school has identified as particularly necessary, given its rural location and its almost mono-cultural make-up.
- The school is outward looking and actively seeks to work in partnership with other schools, organisations and individuals to help develop and evaluate its practice. The local authority has both supported and monitored the school in line with that judged to be necessary for a school identified as satisfactory at its last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is in a state of transition with changes of membership and a new Chair in post. Its members provide a good range of expertise. Governors are very committed to ensuring that governance is of a high order and have undertaken recent training on 'stronger governance'. They have acted quickly on the insights gained to improve procedures and practice, and to ensure they are carrying out their responsibilities well. An action plan has been written to indicate further priorities. The governing body has a good knowledge of the school, including in relation to the quality of pupils' outcomes, teaching and its links to pay progression. Governors effectively monitor the use and impact of funding to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium and to promote sport. Governors ask questions of the school's leaders and provide appropriate challenge.

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	124306
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	427003

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Longson
Headteacher	Anne Lockey
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2012
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