

# Story Wood School and Children's Centre

Hastings Road, Perry Common, Birmingham, B23 5AJ

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make huge strides in their learning. In tests at the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils achieve levels that are comparable with pupils nationally in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils entitled to pupil premium achieve very well and make better progress than other pupils in the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils from minority ethnic groups, make as much progress as other pupils.
- Pupils are engaged and challenged in lessons because teachers plan lots of interesting and exciting practical activities.
- Teachers quickly spot those pupils who are not achieving as well as they should, and help them to quickly catch up.
- There is a family feeling throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and learn to take care of themselves and others.
- Strong but sensitive leadership ensures that the needs of pupils are central to all of the school's work.
- The leaders of subjects and other areas of the school systematically check what went well and what did not go so well to set priorities for making the school even better.
- The school provides excellent support to parents. This helps parents to guide their children's learning.
- A rich and relevant curriculum gives pupils a wide understanding of the world, and strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The governing body is knowledgeable, experienced, and reflective and has an excellent overview of the school's work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons; 10 of these were observed with the headteacher or a member of the senior management team.
- Inspectors talked to two groups of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 and spoke to others informally throughout the inspection.
- Pupils' work from each key stage was examined, and pupils from Key Stage 1 were heard reading.
- The 23 responses from parents to the Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View) were examined, as well as 27 responses from the school's own paper questionnaires. Additionally, inspectors spoke to four parents. Returns from 29 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body and the governor responsible for safeguarding. The inspectors held a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the special educational needs coordinator, the Early Years Foundation Stage manager and the learning mentor.
- The inspectors evaluated documentation regarding pupils' current progress and the curriculum, development plans, and procedures, and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Kathy Hooper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Faheem Chishti	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Although the majority of pupils are White British, a high proportion is from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding (pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from families in the armed services) is very high.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is very high, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education. The senior management team works with a group of local schools to improve leadership and management and share good practice.
- The governing body is responsible for day care setting and is the locality lead, responsible for three children's centres that were not part of this inspection.

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

- Help more pupils to aim higher and achieve the higher levels in tests, by encouraging all groups of pupils to develop their confidence in contributing fully in lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Pupils make extremely rapid progress as they move through the school. Their achievement in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 is far better than expected nationally. It is expected that pupils make two levels progress between Key Stages 1 and 2, but in 2013, almost half of the Year 6 pupils had made three levels progress in mathematics and writing, and a third in reading. From a very low starting point, the vast majority of pupils achieve standards expected of all Year 6 pupils nationally and have done so for the last three years.
- Children develop a firm foundation for Year 1 in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The vast majority of children enter Nursery with skills and abilities well below what is typical for their age. By the end of Reception, about half of them achieve a good level of development. The most able children are confident and sociable, readily helping others without being asked. They describe the properties of basic shapes, such as a circle and a triangle, and know how to put numbers in order to 20 and add one on. They write three-letter words and sound out some new words. They can explain the meaning of Christingle.
- The school is very successful in promoting equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils. The achievement of pupils who are entitled to pupil premium is exceptionally high. It is higher than that of their classmates. In 2012, they were two terms ahead of others; in 2013 they were one term ahead.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress because they are carefully targeted and sensitively supported. They make as much progress as other pupils. There is no difference in the progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Pupils who are not yet fluent in English are exceptionally well supported and, as a result, learn quickly.
- Pupils write exceptionally lively and imaginative accounts for different audiences using a wide vocabulary. Their accounts are extremely accurate and precise in terms of punctuation and grammar, and beautifully presented. Pupils solve mathematical problems with great enthusiasm. Less able pupils make use of many clues when reading unfamiliar text as well as sounding out, breaking up and blending parts of words.
- Although the numbers are small, relatively few of the most able pupils achieve higher levels, at the end of Key Stage 2. Very occasionally, teachers do not make sure that all the pupils are fully stretched and helped to develop their confidence by making a full contribution to the lesson.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- Pupils' outstanding progress is due to very skilful teaching and very well targeted support. Teachers are knowledgeable and dedicated to providing pupils with the best possible experiences in the classroom. Pupils enjoy lessons because they are interesting and practical. There are many opportunities for them to have memorable experiences that stimulate their curiosity and fire their imagination. For example, pupils take part in a local music festival. Opportunities for Year 2 to sleep under canvas in the wood are hugely popular.
- Teachers provide a wide range of exciting activities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers make excellent use of the outdoor facilities and engage children extremely well through a good mixture of independent and adult-initiated activities.

- Teachers work very well together to design and develop their lesson planning. They use information about pupils' previous learning to plan different practical activities for the wide range of ability in each class. As a result, pupils want to learn and they make considerable progress in every lesson.
- Staff are flexibly deployed to promote pupils' best progress. Teaching assistants are well trained and work confidently with pupils to move them on in their learning. They are very well briefed by teachers. Some have taken extra training to take individual and small groups who are in danger of falling behind in their progress.
- The senior management team works collaboratively with the rest of the staff modelling good practice and promoting pupils' progress. Where necessary, they take groups of pupils to challenge them even further.
- Teachers' planning identifies clearly what learning is intended and key questions to hook pupils into that learning. Teachers use open-ended questions and model a collaborative approach to learning. They provide frequent, well-focused opportunities for pupils to talk in depth about their learning to others. Because it is acceptable for pupils to make mistakes, they become confident about asking and answering questions.
- Making excellent use of investigations, teachers quickly engage pupils and put new learning into relevant contexts. One class's visit to the wood helped them to think how a character in the book they were reading would have felt. Pupils came up with a wider range of vocabulary to describe the boy's feelings and thoughts than would have been the case had they remained in the classroom.
- Pupils' learning is very carefully checked. In lessons teachers explore pupils' misunderstandings. Through their marking, teachers help pupils to understand where they have been successful, how they can improve, and the next steps in their learning. Pupils check their own work and help others to improve their work. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the teacher's marking, building a helpful discussion about their learning.
- Teachers are particularly good at providing extra support to those who are stuck. Pupils much appreciate the help they receive to catch up. Parents also remark on the great benefits of the extra help their children receive when they do not understand.

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

- Parents, pupils and staff overwhelmingly agree that the behaviour in school is excellent. Pupils have superb attitudes to learning. They speak of the many exciting opportunities they are given to have different experiences. They value visits out of school because they are really interesting. They expect to learn as well as enjoying the visits. Pupils' attendance this term is above average.
- Lessons are orderly and there is an almost tangible atmosphere of industry as pupils persevere with tasks that are challenging. Pupils and their parents appreciate the speedy responses and support when children get stuck in their learning.
- Behaviour outside lessons is excellent because there are many interesting activities for pupils to be involved in. Pupils who have challenging behaviour are skilfully steered towards lunchtime activities. Sports coaches promote orderly and productive games.
- Peer mentors and playground pals ensure that play at lunchtimes is purposeful. Older pupils look

after younger ones. Staff are vigilant, often joining in the play with the pupils.

There are many opportunities for pupils to carry responsibilities and to take part in decision-making. Members of the school council and eco council work hard and take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils say that it does a good job in improving the school.

- Although a higher than average proportion of pupils come from other schools partway through their primary school education, nearly all settle quickly and flourish. Parents speak of the school 'turning their children around' and appreciate the frequency and quality of information they receive about their children's progress.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and have an extremely good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the problems surrounding the use of the internet. Safeguarding procedures are robust.
- Occasionally, troubled and vulnerable pupils are excluded for their challenging behaviour for the greater good of the others. The vast majority of those excluded do not reoffend.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The headteacher's firm but compassionate leadership has brought about enormous improvements in teaching and the learning of pupils. All decision-making revolves round improved provision for pupils.
- Teachers in charge of subjects and other areas of the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, work with colleagues to ensure that teaching is never less than good and often outstanding. Collaborative teaching and whole-school training help teachers to improve their practice and there is good dialogue among staff about learning. Staff also help teachers in local schools to improve their practice.
- The school has a sharp and accurate focus on key priorities for improvement. All aspects of the school's work are systematically checked and the staff are constantly challenged to improve. Teachers' own targets for improvement are very well matched to whole-school priorities for improving pupils' progress and the teaching standards. Firm action is promptly taken to address relative weaknesses. For example, steps taken to improve reading and girls' progress in mathematics have already had a measurable impact.
- Staff are very well deployed to ensure the best possible learning for pupils. The progress of each pupil is regularly and closely checked and interventions are put in place very quickly. Pupils and their parents are very appreciative of the help they are given to address their difficulties.
- Parents are very well supported in their role; there are informative resources on the school website to help them. The school's excellent links with parents, including those that are hard to reach, ensure the vast majority are engaged with the school. Their involvement benefits parents personally as well as building strong partnerships with their children's teachers.
- A vibrant and exciting curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. A wide range of activities within the school day expand pupils' experiences and complement relevant, integrated and imaginative schemes of work. For example, during the inspection, the Reception class attended the local church for a service and made Christingles. There were whole-class African drumming and brass instrument lessons, and rugby sessions for Year 6 with the local community police. The wood is extremely well used as a

setting for learning as well as forest school activities.

- Vulnerable pupils' needs are skilfully targeted through a rich range of lunchtime and after school clubs while responding to the interests of pupils, such as cookery, gymnastics, Spanish, information and communication technology, book and cine clubs.
- The school's use of the primary sports funding has enabled it to extend the range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Lunchtime games are purposefully led by sports coaches. More pupils are involved in sports than previously and the neediest are sensitively targeted. The school has strong links with its feeder secondary school and a local special school through the sports partnership programme.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is very experienced and knowledgeable. It reflects on its work in the school very well, and has an action plan for its own improvement. Members work as a professional team. It has a high profile within the school. External training is very well complemented by training on the job through paired work. Governors have a clear picture of the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's priorities for development. They hold the school to account very well. For example, they know that the achievement of pupils supported by pupil premium is better than that of others. They have an excellent understanding of teachers' work and their responsibilities regarding progression through the pay scale. The governing body is valued for its conscientiousness and efficiency.

## 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>	103213
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	433144

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	232
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sam Miller
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 September 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 3863
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