

Blurton Primary School

Poplar Drive , Blurton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST3 3AZ

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- All groups of pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, resulting in above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6.
- Teaching is good with some teaching that is outstanding. Lessons are planned well. Pupils enjoy what they are asked to do and respond well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- Behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding in lessons. Pupils are polite, very helpful to visitors and friendly.
- There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities around the school.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, provide a strong drive to improve the school. This has led to improvements both in teaching and in pupils' achievements. There are clear systems in place to check how well the school is doing.
- The governing body is led well. Governors provide a good level of challenge and also good support to the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching for pupils to make rapid progress.
- Pupils' handwriting and the way work is presented are not good.
- Not all teachers give the most able pupils work to do which is harder than the work they give to the rest of their pupils.
- The quality of learning in the outside area for children in the Reception classes is not as good as that in their classrooms.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons. Additional short visits to lessons were carried out to look at issues such as how well pupils get on with their classmates and their overall behaviour.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random, with school council members, with Eco members, the Chair and another member of the Governing Body and with senior staff. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about the types of books they enjoy.
- Pupils' current work and assessments along with school documents were scrutinised.
- Inspectors reviewed 25 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- They reviewed the inspection questionnaires completed and returned by staff.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Loughlin

Additional Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- 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.
- The school has achieved many external awards, including the Eco Bronze award.
- At the time of the inspection, there was an acting headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more pupils make excellent progress by:
 - making sure that the work set for the most able pupils is sufficiently demanding so that these pupils reach their potential in all classes
 - ensuring pupils' handwriting and the way they present their work is of a good quality or better
 - ensuring the opportunities for Reception class children to learn in the outside area are consistently as good as those provided in the inside area.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. Standards of attainment have risen since the last inspection and are above average in English and mathematics. Pupils really enjoy learning. One pupil remarked, 'The best thing about this school is the lessons.'
- When children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills and understanding are below the levels typically expected for their age. All children are given good support and help, especially in relation to their personal development, resulting in good progress. For example, the importance of caring about others was emphasised well in an outstanding lesson based on the story of *Little Bo Peep*. One child said how pleased she was that the sheep had found their mummy again!
- There is good provision for children's learning in classrooms, but this contrasts with the missed opportunities for children in the Reception classes to extend these learning experiences consistently well in the outside area.
- Good progress continues throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, resulting in standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above the national average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Inspection evidence shows that current standards are also above those expected nationally.
- While the most able pupils attain above average standards by the time they leave Year 6, especially in mathematics, in some classes the work they are asked to do is too easy. For example, pupils who have successfully completed work sit patiently while other pupils who find it difficult receive help. This slows the pace of learning for the most able pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop a strong interest in reading from an early age. Progress in reading is strong. The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics (early reading skills) screening check has improved to reach the national average. Older pupils say they get plenty of chances to read and find reading 'really interesting.' They talk confidently about the different styles of authors.
- Pupils use their reading, writing and mathematical skills well in other subjects.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same good progress as their classmates because the support they receive helps them to learn well.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding, including those eligible for free school meals, make good and at times exceptional progress. At the end of Year 6, their attainment is better than that found nationally and they exceed what other pupils' in the school attain in English and mathematics.
- There is a high level of participation in physical education. These include out-of-school sporting activities. Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles, they understand, and can clearly explain, the importance of taking part in sport.

The quality of teaching is good

- The effective use made of information from the regular checks made on teaching and learning has ensured that teaching is good, with some examples of outstanding teaching.
- The school's focus on involving pupils in helping each other to improve the work they do is well on its way to being successful. For example, in Year 3 one pupil who had used 'which' in her writing instead of 'who' was corrected by her partner.
- A major strength of teaching is the strong emphasis given to the importance of high-quality relationships and mostly high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers' good use of information about how well pupils are learning in different subjects to plan future lessons ensures that in most classes any small gaps in pupils' learning are addressed promptly.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures children are settled well into school and

that they enjoy school and feel safe. Staff are mostly skilful at linking work done by children in one subject with that in another subject. For example, in the Nursery class, both the inside and outside areas are used effectively in providing a good range of learning experiences. This is not always the case in the Reception classes.

- Where teaching in the rest of the school is at times outstanding, pupils are bursting with enthusiasm to explain what they are doing. For example, the most able pupils in a Year 4 class are rightly proud of not only their note-taking skills, but also of the way they produce well-constructed sentences from the information gathered.
- Where teaching is at times not as strong, the work set for the most able pupils does not provide sufficient challenge to enable them to reach higher levels in their work. For example, the most able are often given the same work as others in the class and this hinders their ability to make quicker progress.
- Reading is taught well across the school. Pupils are given good opportunities to extend their writing skills and numeracy skills. For example, pupils write competently about famous black celebrities as part of a focus on Black Africa.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and pupils are increasingly made aware of how they might improve the quality of their own work. For example, a pupil was able to explain why the work she was doing using a protractor to measure angles was not accurate because she had looked at the inside edge of the protractor rather than the outside edge. She then went on to correct her mistakes.
- Where marking is not as effective, insufficient attention is given to weaknesses in the quality of pupils' handwriting and the way that their work is presented.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in school. The work they do, for example, in supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs across the school, is of a good quality.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Positive behaviour is a key strength of the school. Pupils of all ages are keen to 'earn' special badges relating to how well they behave in and around the school. Behaviour in and around the school during the inspection was good, with examples of outstanding behaviour in some classes. Pupils say they enjoy school and that most of us behave well. 'We all get on well together,' was the agreed comment of a number of pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe, as a result of the school's emphasis on, for example, the importance of e-safety and on not talking to people they do not know. Pupils are aware that the school's badge provided for visitors means that it is safe to talk to them.
- Pupils are proud of their school and respond well to the many opportunities provided for them to take on responsibilities. For example, pupils have to write letters to apply for a wide range of jobs, such as dinnertime supervisors, then take part in an interview if they are successful and if they are, writing a letter accepting the post. Pupils on the school council and Eco warriors take their responsibilities seriously.
- The school employs a good range of strategies to support pupils who at times present challenging behaviour. A learning mentor provides good support to pupils who need it.
- Pupils are polite and friendly and are willing to share their experiences about school. For example, one pupil said it felt 'weird' to be chosen as a school council member by his classmates. When asked why, he replied, 'I did not realise my classmates liked me!'
- Parents who completed the school's own questionnaire and those who completed the on-line questionnaire were mostly confident that the school provides a safe environment and that pupils enjoy school and behave well.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. Pupils are confident that should any ever occur, adults would deal with it firmly.

- Attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher's enthusiasm, drive and determination have contributed well to the school's success in improving teaching, the use made of assessment information and in pupils' involvement in improving their own work.
- The well-planned restructuring of the school's leadership team has led to greater involvement in leadership and management by senior leaders. They understand their roles and use effective procedures to check the progress of pupils.
- Middle leaders are increasingly involved in leading their subjects and as such have a good understanding of what has been achieved and what still needs to be done.
- The school's self-evaluation document provides an accurate picture of what the school does well and the priorities for further improvement.
- Robust checking on the school's work by senior leaders, with a well-planned programme of staff development, is firmly in place. The monitoring of teaching and of the performance of teachers is of a good quality. Staff pay awards and performance management targets are closely linked to pupils' achievements.
- The curriculum allows pupils to not only extend their knowledge, but also to utilise their basic skills well. When required, visits and the expertise of visiting staff enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- The school is highly successful in making sure any discrimination is tackled well and in the way it helps all pupils to have equal opportunities to succeed. This is clearly demonstrated in the way that the pupil premium funding is used effectively, resulting in the pupils who receive this funding bucking the national trend and achieving well.
- Parents and staff who completed the questionnaires are very positive about all aspects of school life.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural is strong and documented well.
- The local authority regards the school as one only in need of 'light touch' support.
- The school has an excellent plan showing how the additional primary school sport funding is being used to enhance further the provision for physical education. The funding is used effectively to improve pupils' physical well-being.
- Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that all requirements are met and that the building is a safe environment.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - 'We prefer to look at the data in the school's 'Raise on Line' document rather than just what is shown in the School Data Dashboard document.' This comment made by governors demonstrates clearly the high priority given to knowing how well pupils are doing and what still needs to be done. Members of the governing body bring a wide range of experience and expertise to their role. The governing body is led well by an enthusiastic Chair. All legal requirements are met. Governors not only support the school, but ask challenging questions of it. Governors ensure that the systems to check the performance of teachers are thorough and they receive information about the quality of teaching, seeking assurance that salary levels are linked to performance. The governing body uses the pupil premium funding effectively in making sure it has a good impact on the progress and social well-being of eligible pupils.

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	124002
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	440871

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Jones
Acting Headteacher	Emma Gater
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2011
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