

St Peter's CofE (C) Primary School

Reservoir Road, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1BE

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- This school has made impressive improvement on its journey through special measures.
- Leaders and managers have high expectations of both pupils and teachers and manage performance well. Governors contribute well but no-one loses sight of individual pupils in this process.
- The assessment of pupils' abilities is both accurate and thorough. It is used to plan for future work and deploy additional support.
- Teachers have high expectations, offer stimulating challenges and vary their styles of teaching well according to pupils' needs.
- The curriculum is thoughtful and stimulating. It has a clear focus on literacy and mathematics and is taught in an interesting fashion. It does not yet use ICT (information and communication technology) in innovative ways.
- Pupils and adults show respect and courtesy towards each other leading to a happy and inclusive environment. Behaviour both in classes and outside is good.
- Attendance is well above the national average and the community is strongly encouraged to get involved in the life of the school.
- Almost all pupils between the ages of 7 and 11 make progress above national expectations. In 2014 the school expects well over half of all pupils to reach the higher levels in reading and mathematics. These figures are projected to be even higher in 2015.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There remains some variation in the performance of some year groups. Pupils in Year 3 make less progress, as do younger pupils in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of marking of pupils' spelling is inconsistent. As a consequence, spelling remains the weaker aspect of literacy.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and some boys make slightly less progress, especially in their writing and show slightly lower attendance levels.
- Some of the leadership team are relatively new to their roles and as a consequence, there is a variation in the depth and rigour of monitoring.

Information about this inspection

- This was the fifth monitoring visit since the school was placed in special measures in 2012.
- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, including examples from every year group, taught by permanent teachers and temporary staff. The headteacher was not in school on the first day of the inspection but a joint lesson observation was held with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors also considered a wide range of key school documentation, including the school improvement plan, governors' and staff meeting minutes and the records of local authority support and intervention.
- Other observations included an assembly, behaviour outside of classrooms and the session taught by a specialist visiting music teacher.
- Parent view has only 14 responses for the current year so inspectors also sampled the school's own questionnaire to seek the views of parents.
- A telephone conversation was held with the Local Leader of Education, who is headteacher of a nearby school and who currently supports the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the full senior leadership team, several governors and a representative from the local authority. A discussion was held with a group of pupils and informal discussions with many others.
- Inspectors considered a large sample of pupils' work from Years 2, 4, 5 and 6 in both literacy and mathematics.
- The inspection also covered a full review of safeguarding practices and records.

Inspection team

Ceri Morgan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Onyon

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage includes one nursery class and two Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium, which provides funding for pupils who are in the care of the local authority, entitled to free school meals or from service families, is lower than that found nationally.
- The majority of pupils are of white British heritage but there is a growing trend for pupils from a range of other countries to join the school. Most of the arrivals are fluent in English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs.
- The school runs many after-school clubs.
- The school was placed in special measures in 2012.
- The school receives the support of a Local Leader in Education who is also a headteacher from a neighbouring school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards for education, which are the minimum expected for all primary schools nationally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all groups of pupils, especially boys, achieve equally well in their spelling by giving closer attention to detailed marking in this aspect.
- Develop the contribution of ICT to the curriculum and monitor the impact this has on standards of mathematics and writing.
- Improve the progress made by pupils who have had frequent changes of teachers in previous years or who make less progress, including Year 3 and pupils aged between 5 and 7 in mathematics.
- Make sure all members of the wider leadership team contribute fully to monitoring and evaluating school development.
- Ensure that the attendance of all matches the best by improving the attendance of those eligible for additional pupil premium funding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The school made improvements in attainment that were significantly stronger than all schools nationally in 2013. It now has accurate assessment and target setting processes and over 90% of the oldest pupils currently in school are on track to achieve the expected levels in reading and mathematics and around a third expected to reach the higher levels. These figures are expected to climb further in 2015 with well over half of all pupils reaching the higher levels. Pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress as their peers, including those who are supported at school action, school action plus and those with statements.
- Standards in writing have improved similarly but from a lower base and thus lag slightly behind reading, especially for boys. Spelling standards lag well behind those in grammar and punctuation. Nevertheless, even here, improvements have been rapid, especially for the oldest pupils.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are higher than those found nationally. This had not been the case for some years but improvement since 2012 has been significantly above national averages. Standards in reading are especially high and in the current Year 6, around 40% of all pupils are reading at levels higher than those expected and almost all are at the required levels. This includes reading a wide range of texts, both fiction and non-fiction, using expression and showing genuine fluency.
- The school gives a high priority to regular guided reading sessions and uses the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) well at every age to help pupils make sense of words they have not encountered before.
- Leadership at the highest levels is highly effective. Leaders act quickly and decisively when they spot a pupil's progress dipping. The 2013 data bear no relation to current practice and standards as it reflects what used to be the quality of education and not what it is like now.
- In mathematics, pupils have a good level of understanding in all aspects of the subject. They are encouraged to investigate, understand graphs and isometric drawings, and the older pupils have a good understanding of decimals. They are able to apply their understanding to solve problems, including occasional complex problems.
- In one Year 6 class, pupils are able to solve algebraic problems involving decimals such as $4(a+8) = 18$ to find the value of a . Underpinning all of this is a good understanding of basic number and multiplication tables. This deep understanding is less evident in the younger classes and pupils between the ages of 5 and 7 show a less secure grasp of number appropriate to their age than do the older pupils.
- There is, however, an appropriate emphasis on high challenge for the more able and the school is projecting that almost two thirds of all pupils will achieve the higher levels in 2015.
- The biggest step up however is in the standards of writing. The school now organises frequent themed weeks based on core literacy skills and these are used as a vehicle for imaginative writing sessions. These are exciting and engaging events which lead to excellent vocabulary. During the inspection, the whole school were puzzling over what on earth could have left such large footprints and built its nest on their school playground. The community added to this and even the police (a school governor) were equally puzzled until eventually on the Friday the large

egg cracked to reveal...

- The above example led to some delightful extended writing but is not isolated. In one book, a Year 5 pupil had written, when asked to describe the staff characters in a Dickensian workhouse at Christmas, 'cold hearts live here'.
- This rich approach to a rich curriculum is demonstrated in all subjects. The use of IT is less well developed however. There are some ambitious plans to use mobile tablet technology but this has yet to take place.
- The additional pupil premium funding is spent on a range of suitable resources, including targeted teacher assistant time and help with reading and phonics where needed. This spend is monitored well and, as a consequence, these pupils are catching up quickly with their peers, although their attainment is still below that of the school as a whole and they remain about 3 months behind their classmates.
- The additional funds made available for improving sports provision are used for additional swimming lessons, an innovative climbing wall and extra sports clubs. This has generated much excitement among the children and improved their physical well-being.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have good relationships with pupils, leading to a very constructive and happy atmosphere within school. There are plenty of smiles in classrooms and a delightful use of humour used to motivate pupils in some classes.
- There is a strong team of teaching assistants who support the lessons well. They are active participants in creating a productive atmosphere, questioning well and maintaining a discreet but effective presence in lessons.
- All teachers vary the teaching strategies they use to reflect the content being taught and the response of the pupils to the lesson as it unfolds in front of them. This includes a wide variety of styles, occasionally quiet formal sessions (for example, guided reading) to practical hands-on problem solving sessions which generate high excitement and motivation. Both teachers and pupils switch comfortably between the various styles on offer.
- The teaching of writing is especially strong. Teachers show high levels of subject knowledge with accurate demonstrations of the use of grammar and punctuation. The teaching of spelling strategies is less secure, and variations in the marking of incorrect spelling have led to a weakness in this area.
- Assessment of how well pupils achieve is accurate and then used well to prepare lessons which both challenge the more able and support those who need it. In one lesson the teacher had planned for five different levels of work to match the needs of her group in careful detail.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults have high expectations of children. They provide a range of activities to stimulate children's interests and help them to develop a range of skills. As a consequence the youngest children make good gains in their learning.
- Teaching is good throughout the school but some classes have a small legacy of underachievement that remains. This is especially true in the current Year 3. This year group, in previous years, was particularly affected by unsettled staffing. Although this cohort of pupils is currently making progress, the evidence of previous limited progress is still evident.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The pupils say nothing but good things about their peers. They say there really is no bullying, no serious teasing, almost no bad language and no homophobic remarks or racism. The worst thing they could think of was that 'sometimes we could hold the doors open for each other more'. Inspectors' evidence and the school's records support their views.
- Attitudes to learning are good or better in all classes, and noticeably sharper than in previous years. Pupils are very keen to learn. There is a slight variation with some classes more evidently keen than others. However, pupils work well together, listening respectfully to their classmates. They also work well in total silence when required and, despite a minimal level of whispering in some classes; do not disturb each other's learning.
- Previous inattention to detail and scruffy work have largely been eradicated.
- Teachers and other adults apply the schools' behaviour code and rules consistently and there have been no exclusions in recent years. The pupils know they have a fresh start every day and good behaviour is rewarded ('if we are good we go onto the rainbow and very good we become shooting stars').
- The evidence from Parent View and other questionnaires also supports the view that virtually all parents think the school encourages and achieves good behaviour of pupils.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are kept safe by a close attention to detail when activities reinforce the need to keep safe. These include knowing about online safety, water and road safety. Key messages are supported by theatre groups and other initiatives, including Year 5 pupils looking after younger pupils as play leaders.
- 'Teachers make us feel safe' say the pupils and their view is confirmed by the school's safeguarding procedures and records.
- The inclusive attitudes of all help develop strong social, moral spiritual and cultural skills and knowledge. Charitable collections, assemblies and other activities help make all welcome.
- Attendance has improved and is now well above average although for some classes and pupils eligible for free school meals it is slightly lower.
- Pupils are welcoming and friendly to new arrivals, irrespective of their backgrounds and heritage. This is a direct consequence of the school's close attention to developing the social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness of pupils.

The leadership and management is good

- Since being appointed, the headteacher has brought an organised, thoughtful and disciplined approach to management. She leads by example. This has generated very effective procedures in the monitoring of pupils' achievement and the management of adults' performance. Rewards are closely linked to improvements in standards. She is increasingly able to delegate to a wider leadership team which is growing in confidence and skill. She is very well supported by the

newly appointed deputy headteacher. Together they have a good grasp of data and strategic planning.

- The deployment of resources is efficient and well managed. This includes the spending of any additional funding.
- There is clarity of vision in the school brought about by a single-minded pursuit of improvement and excellence across the leadership team. This has made the staff team gel well.
- The school has received good support from the local authority and from the Local Leader of Education (who is himself the headteacher of a neighbouring school). This support is planned to continue even though the school is no longer in special measures. Between them, the two headteachers find innovative and sustainable solutions to any problems.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the school. There are only a limited number of views expressed on Parent View, despite the efforts of the school, but other questionnaires show that parents appreciate the rapid improvements being made by the school.
- Leaders, including governors, are acutely aware that the progress of pupils eligible for additional pupil premium funding needs to improve and have written plans to achieve this. Similarly, they have approved the purchase of some innovative IT resources to improve this aspect of the school's work. They have not yet set specific targets in this regard, however, linked to pupils' progress.
- The wider leadership team has some members who are relatively new to their roles. Although they are effective as a team there is an inconsistency in the level of detail in monitoring and evaluation. This also manifests itself in their respective contribution to school strategic planning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is good. It is thoughtful and proactive. There is a wide range of specialist expertise used well in planning for the future. This includes, for example, welcoming onto the governing body a specialist teacher of mathematics from the high school to give guidance on improving standards in mathematics and a member of the police service who helped with the tricky identification of the mysterious animal nest. The whole group aspire to excellence and in doing so include the wider community well.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body is ambitious for the future, and strikes exactly the right balance between supportive actions and asking challenging questions of the leadership. He brings both business acumen and experience to the role.
 - All governors visit the school regularly and frequently and for specific planned activities rather than unstructured chats. These include assemblies, composing a strategic response to any perceived weaknesses in school performance data and taking responsibility for one area of school performance. They know in detail about the relative strengths in teaching, current and historic pupil performance data, and the management of performance.

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	124252
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	432883

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Woodhead
Headteacher	Samantha Price
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2012
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