

Weston Coyney Junior School

Princess Drive, Weston Coyney, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire, ST3 6NG

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils of all levels of ability do not make consistent progress year on year.
- Pupils do not do as well in mathematics as they do in other subjects.
- In writing, boys do not do as well as girls. This is more marked in this school than in others.
- Not all pupils use grammar, spelling and punctuation well enough to produce good quality writing.
- Teaching is not consistently strong enough to bridge the gaps in pupils' learning.
- Staff do not always use what they know from their checks on pupils' work to set tasks that challenge those of different abilities.
- Teachers do not always explain things well enough to pupils or make clear to them what they have to do next.
- The behaviour of a small minority of pupils in and around the school causes concern to other pupils because this is not attended to consistently by all staff.
- A number of parents have concerns about the quality of care and education their children receive. They believe that when they raise issues, leaders do not always listen to them or take action.
- Leaders have not always checked the work of the school thoroughly enough or acted quickly to identify teaching that slows pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a school that has made considerable improvement in the last year. Pupils are now making better progress because teaching is improving.
- Pupils read well and know how to work out unfamiliar words.
- Most pupils understand how to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher give good guidance to staff on how to improve teaching and pupils' learning.
- The newly elected governing body has made a strong start in holding the school to account for the quality of education provided.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed part of 15 lessons. Many of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders for mathematics and English, and the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). Inspectors also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the response of 32 parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the school day. They also scrutinised 10 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and heard several pupils read. They also scrutinised a number of documents including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized junior school.
- The percentage of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in the care of the local authority and those from service families.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The percentage supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below that seen in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In the past year, several classes have been taught by temporary teachers during periods of staff absence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching across the school is consistently good or better by:
 - making full use of assessment information, including that on entry to the school, to provide work that challenges different groups of pupils, especially the most able, at just the right level
 - checking that staff explain things clearly to pupils so that they always know how to work things out or what they have to do next.
- Accelerate the rate of progress made and raise achievement by:
 - checking that all pupils, and particularly the boys, write more confidently and improve their grammar, spelling and punctuation
 - enabling pupils to develop secure skills in mental mathematics so that they can carry out calculations speedily.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that the checks on the work of the school, including that relating to behaviour, are rigorous, identify quickly what else needs to be improved and lead to successful action
 - working with parents so that they feel their concerns are listened to and, where appropriate, acted upon.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress pupils make as they move through the school requires improvement because in some classes progress slows, even though in others, it speeds up. The standards reached by pupils in Year 6 last year were above average by a small margin. Pupils did better in reading than in writing and mathematics. Pupils in the current Year 6 are set to do better because staff teaching the older pupils are successfully closing the gaps in pupils' previous learning.
- Pupils enter the school with a wide range of skills which are generally similar to what is expected for their age. Their progress from Year 3 to Year 6 matches the national figures for expected progress by the end of Year 6. Too few make better progress than this and for some, for example the boys in writing, progress is too slow.
- Currently, progress has speeded up in Years 4, 5 and 6. In these year groups, the school's own assessments indicate that pupils of all levels of ability are making good progress. For some pupils, however, this is a process of catching up on previous years when their learning did not provide them with the secure base of knowledge and understanding that they needed.
- Pupils' speaking skills are very mixed. While a few speak confidently and use a wide and descriptive vocabulary, others do not speak clearly or in much detail. Sometimes pupils use slang words that do not then help their writing or calculations.
- Overall, boys do not do as well as the girls do in writing and with a bigger gap than is seen nationally. This is partly because some boys say what they have to write about is not very interesting. The school is, therefore, checking the impact of changes to the way it links subjects including the greater use of mathematics within other subjects. Also, some pupils, both girls and boys, do not have a secure understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling, and their handwriting is poorly formed.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are sometimes limited by their inability to explain things or use what they already know to solve problems. Their ability to calculate and their mental mathematics skills are often slow, and they take some time to work out the answers. For example, pupils in Year 4 struggled to work out how many pupils had an arm length between 35 and 45 centimetres, because they did not understand what the information on a chart told them.
- Pupils generally do better in reading than other areas and have done so for several years. Many read confidently and know how to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils read in groups to staff and individually to trained volunteers. They are often supported well in reading at home.
- Those who are most able make similar overall progress to that of their classmates. Many of these pupils are making expected progress, but few are doing better than this because the work set for them does not challenge their thinking well enough.
- Those entitled to support from the pupil premium often do particularly well in reading because of skilled help from teaching assistants. However, additional support to boost their mathematical skills has not been as effective. While the gap is closing, pupils entitled to additional support are around two terms behind their classmates in mathematics and almost a term behind in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally reach the levels attained by similar pupils nationally. Again, they do better in reading than they do in writing because traditionally more additional support has been provided in this area. Improved leadership in this area is making a difference.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the sample of pupils' work and observations made during the inspection indicate the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection, teaching over time has not been effective enough and some elements still require improvement.
- A key reason why the quality of teaching and learning requires improvement is the variable use of information from assessments and marking to provide activities that interest and challenge

those of different abilities. The school has recently improved the way it checks the progress of every pupil. However, teachers and support staff do not always use the information they have effectively enough to provide suitably challenging work.

- Sometimes activities are too hard for some pupils and too easy for others. For example, some pupils in Year 3 did not have a clear grasp of the units of measure they were working with and the scales they were using. They were, therefore, unsure what a gram or kilogram was and any difference between them.
- Staff have mixed skills in explaining things to pupils or adapting what they have planned when pupils do not understand things straight away. For example, some more-able Year 6 pupils struggled to recognise how to work out fractions and decimals because explanations were not clear. Staff did not identify and tackle this quickly enough.
- Learning is best when staff use information from checking pupils' progress well and have consistently high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Some staff use questions particularly effectively to prompt pupils to go further with their ideas. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils accurately identified the features of a play script. The teacher continually checked and challenged pupils to identify the similarities and differences between a story and a play.
- A major improvement since the previous inspection has been in the marking of pupils' work. This is now done regularly and in a consistent format. Staff identify in pink what the pupils have done well and in green what they need to improve. The pupils then do their 'fix it' work in red so that they and staff can see how they have made corrections or improvements. Older pupils explain that they think this is useful as they now know clearly what they need to do to improve.
- Teaching assistants make a variable contribution to supporting learning. Some, as seen in Year 4, made a good contribution to improving learning by providing less-able pupils with the opportunity to act out parts of a play script. This helped them understand how this differs from a story. Other support staff are less effective because they are not active enough in responding to what the pupils are doing or if the behaviour of an individual prevents others working.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. While the behaviour of many pupils is good in lessons, a few do not behave well in and around the school. Several pupils and parents indicate there are incidents that upset some pupils. The staff generally tackle incidents of bad behaviour appropriately, but they have not yet succeeded in ensuring that pupils' and parents' perceptions of behaviour are good.
- In lessons, most pupils behave correctly and many are keen to learn. However, a small number do not try very hard to improve, as illustrated by the untidy work in some books. In discussions, while several pupils of all abilities readily volunteer their ideas, some simply wait for others to do this and make little effort to join in.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. Pupils say that at lunchtime not all staff take a strong stance about what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour. This can result in name-calling, which distresses some pupils, and play-fighting that worries others. The small number of pupils that have identified behaviour, emotional and social difficulties are usually managed well in the classroom, where there are few incidents. The learning mentor is playing an increasing part in successfully supporting a small number of pupils, and in lessening the incidents that occur.
- Senior leaders are taking an increasingly strong stance on bullying and the number of exclusions has recently grown in order to make clear that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. Pupils have a sound understanding of what constitutes bullying and know this is a repeated action. They can explain what cyber-bullying is and the other different types of bullying.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe in many different situations. However, they are not always aware of the needs or rights of the majority. A few pupils do not respect others, and are not aware of or do not care about how their behaviour impacts on those around them.

- Checks are carried out on all adults to ensure their suitability to work with children. Measures have been taken during recent work on the school building to ensure that this is secure. Attendance is in line with national averages and the school has clear plans to monitor this for specific groups to identify the impact of any absences on learning.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because key changes have been recent and have not yet had time to make a difference to the rate of pupils' progress. In recent years, there has been variability in the quality of teaching and learning and, therefore, the progress made. Leaders did not act quickly enough to remedy this situation.
- Some staff and parents have struggled to recognise that recent changes to teaching, learning and other aspects of the school are necessary for the school to keep up with the pace of change in other schools. The headteacher, the senior leadership and the governors have a clear vision for the school and recent improvements, such as the elimination of weak teaching, show that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- Senior leaders are working to create a united team where all staff are committed to the school's vision for improvement. The school's view of its work is generally accurate. Plans for improvement focus on the right priorities.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher have a good grasp of what makes teaching effective. There are regular checks of pupils' progress and the new assessment leader ensures that a good range of information concerning progress of individuals and groups is available. However, as yet this is not used well enough for the staff to be sure that all groups of pupils achieve their best.
- There have been effective changes to middle leadership. The special educational needs coordinator and the learning mentor have a secure grasp of how to develop their role, including monitoring the progress of different groups, which has started to make a difference to the learning of these pupils. Those leaders responsible for English and mathematics are now more involved in checking the work of their colleagues and have a better understanding of what the data tell them about pupils' progress in their subject.
- Teachers' performance is carefully monitored. Their targets are closely linked to the school's priorities. The headteacher has had to give some difficult messages when teaching has rightly been judged to be weak. As a result, inadequate teaching has been eliminated and the quality of teaching is improving.
- The local authority has played a key role in supporting the school in the last year. They provide a well-thought-out level of support to ensure that resources are targeted at the most important areas for improvement. This has been closely linked to a good programme of additional training for teaching and support staff that is improving skills. There are strong cultural elements to the subjects being taught and recent changes, for instances encouraging boys' interest in writing, are improving subject planning. Provision for all Year 5 pupils to learn to play a musical instrument is appreciated by pupils, and additional funding, such as the pupil premium, is used to ensure that all pupils have equal access to such activities. Pupils really enjoy singing and do this to a good standard, which helps to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The views of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire about the effectiveness of the school and its leadership are very mixed. Leaders and governors recognise that many hark back to how the school was years ago and do not understand the reason for many changes. Several have concerns about the behaviour of a small number of pupils and think that the school does not take account of their views.
- The new primary sport funding is used appropriately at times. The school employs sports coaches for additional activities at lunch and after school. However, some aspects of the way this is managed require improvement so that the skills, of not only pupils but staff as well, are improved to a higher level. As yet the school has not closely monitored the impact of such work.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has recently undergone significant changes with several newly elected governors and a new Chair of Governors. All of the governors who met inspectors share a real passion for improvement. They are well briefed and knowledgeable about what the data tell them about progress. They are working hard and with clear determination to develop their role as a critical friend of the school and to hold it to account for the progress pupils make. They are clearly aware of the journey the school is on and the recent challenges. Governors have undertaken training and understand their roles well. However, as they are still at a very early stage in their roles, they sometimes have a slightly generous view of improvements and the impact of recent changes. Governors discuss how staff are rewarded for their performance and recognise the need to strengthen this link to ensure that only staff who perform well receive additional payments. Governors' work with senior leaders to ensure that the school carries out checks of its effectiveness in key areas and that it meets the requirements to ensure a safe environment for all.

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	124027
Local authority	Stoke-On-Trent
Inspection number	431148

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pauline Rushton
Headteacher	Julie Nevitt
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2012
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