

St Leonard's CofE (C) First School

School Lane, Dunston, Stafford, ST18 9AG

Inspection dates 27–28 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.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They achieve well and reach standards at the end of Key Stage 1 that are above national averages.
- Pupils make good progress from Reception to Year 4 in reading, writing and mathematics and some make exceptional progress.
- Good teaching promotes very positive attitudes to learning from all groups of pupils and behaviour in lessons and around school is good.
- Pupils, parents and staff say that this is a safe and happy school.
- The headteacher and her senior leaders, supported by the school governors, are improving the quality of teaching and raising pupils' achievement further.
- Pupils of all ages are proud and eager to take on responsibilities in the school. They learn to do more on their own and to look for opportunities to help others.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Examples of outstanding teaching from within and outside the school are not yet shared enough to help all teachers improve their skills.
- The quality of work in some pupils' books is not always high enough, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Teachers' planning does not consistently cater for the skills and understanding of the most-able pupils.
- Homework, for older pupils, is not given often enough, despite what the policy says.

Information about this inspection

- The lead inspector observed eight lessons, five of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector looked at pupils' work in their books and listened to younger pupils read.
- There were meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The lead inspector also considered the 27 responses by parents to a recent questionnaire from the school.
- The lead inspector examined the school's own information on pupils' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Leonard's is smaller than the average-sized primary school and takes pupils up to Year 4.
- Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school runs a breakfast club on the premises.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers seek out and take on board the very best practice in their own and other schools
 - the work in pupils' books for all subjects is of the same high standard as it is for English and mathematics.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school, including its governance, by:
 - making sure teachers of older pupils follow the school's homework policy and set regular amounts of homework
 - identifying and nurturing the gifts and talents of the most-able pupils in all years.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in Reception with a wide range of skills and understanding that range from being below to being above those typical for their age. These levels vary considerably from year to year. They go on to achieve standards at the end of Key Stage 1 that are above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are also working to a high standard. Pupils' strong achievement results from highly positive attitudes to school and to their learning.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils have continued to make good progress from Reception through to Year 4. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is in line with and sometimes above that found nationally. Many current pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 1 and all current pupils in Years 3 and 4 are on track to make at least expected progress and some to make exceptional progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils make expected progress and are attaining high levels in reading, writing and mathematics. They are not, however, consistently making more than expected progress in these subjects.
- The pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress broadly in line with other groups and in some years they outperform other pupils. Given the very small numbers, it is not possible to comment on the attainment of this group of pupils in English or mathematics without potentially identifying individuals.
- The school keeps close track of these pupils' progress and they receive a good level of support from classroom teachers and support staff. The pupil premium is used to support attendance at activities at the start and end of the school day, one-to-one coaching in English and mathematics, and involvement in 'positive play' sessions that improve pupils' confidence and boost their self-esteem.
- Reading and writing are strongly promoted in the school and the quality of teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is good. This has not, however, been reflected in pupils' performance in the Year 1 reading check in the last two years. However a higher than national proportion of pupils met the expected level in phonics in Year 2 and standards in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also typically good. This is because their individual needs are quickly identified and fully met. The school takes full advantage of having a relatively small number of pupils by keeping a clear focus on individual pupils. This is typical of the school's caring approach to promoting equal opportunities and tackling all forms of discrimination.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning and teachers have high expectations of them. Relationships are strong in all classes and teachers make learning enjoyable and motivate pupils to make good progress.
- The headteacher makes accurate judgements about the quality of teaching and good teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. However, teachers do not have enough

opportunities to share best practice both within the school and from visiting other schools. This is slowing the spread of outstanding teaching.

- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children work and play together well, listening to their teachers and to each other. Experienced and well-qualified support staff give additional guidance and care. Children stick at tasks, even when they are tricky, and learn to make decisions for themselves. Teachers encourage a sense of wonder and curiosity about the world, making particularly good use of the outdoor area. For example, in one session pupils closed their eyes and imagined an arctic scene before then going on a 'hunt' for polar bears in the school's nature area.
- Teachers' planning is thorough and they take account of pupils' existing knowledge and skills when grouping them in the classroom. They also make good use of highly skilled support staff, particularly in one-to-one support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, work in pupils' books shows that teachers are not always setting harder tasks for the most-able pupils, and this slows their progress.
- Teachers give close attention to the accuracy of pupils' grammar and spelling while also encouraging them to write at length, creatively and with fluency. In one Year 4 lessons pupils developed suspense stories using time connectives and were delighted to be able to take their stories home to work on them further. Pupils and parents commented that they would like more regular opportunities to complete homework tasks, as stated in the school's homework policy.
- The skills of members of staff are well used and, for example, one teacher is also an experienced artist and shares his skills with all pupils thus boosting the quality of artwork in the school. Given the small number of staff, good use is made of visiting professionals such as a local secondary school French teacher and local teachers of musical instruments. The lead inspector observed Reception pupils making good progress in a lively dance session with a physical education coach. The session was paid for by the additional funding available for sports and physical education.
- In mathematics in Key Stage 1, pupils begin to learn the language of the subject and so they are able to discuss different ways of solving problems. Teachers skilfully relate these problems to practical questions that arise in everyday life to do with counting money, sharing food or making choices. The English and mathematics tasks in pupils' books are neatly presented and show pupils' pride in their work. This is not always the case in other subjects where the quality of work varies. For example, topic books sometimes include too many worksheets where care has not been taken and work is not completed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a culture of respect and courtesy between pupils and staff and they establish caring and positive relationships in lessons. Pupils respond well to teachers' instructions and happily work with each other in pairs and small groups. These good attitudes to learning are also clear in the pupils' pride in their school, their uniform and some of their work.
- Discussion with pupils, staff and parents and the school's own records show that there are very few incidents of disruptive behaviour and any that occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. There are examples of pupils who have arrived at the school having behavioural difficulties that hindered their progress. Because of one-to-one care, firm and fair guidance and the involvement of parents these pupils have gone on to make good progress and to begin to catch up with their peers.

- Pupils' behaviour around school is very good and they look after each other. The youngest pupils take on increasingly responsible roles and have the support of older pupils, for example acting as playground leaders at break time. There are numerous other responsibilities for pupils, from milk monitors to school council representatives and pupils take these roles seriously, wanting to share and to help. Pupils' eagerness and enthusiasm in taking on these roles around school is not yet seen in their attitudes to learning in the classroom and this is what is preventing behaviour and safety from being outstanding.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are aware of the importance of staying safe and show sensible and considerate behaviour around school. Pupils know what constitutes bullying and what to do on the rare occasions it might occur. Pupils play an active role in their own safety with, for example, Year 4 pupils learning to make checks for safety before commencing playground activities.
- There are no pupils who are persistently absent and no necessity for any exclusions from school. Attendance is above average and continues to improve. This is a result of the school working closely with parents and encouraging the pupils with certificates and awards for good attendance. The school's breakfast club also supports good attendance as well as including a daily 'workout' run by a professional physical education coach.
- While older pupils learn about e-safety and dangers associated with the use of the internet, younger pupils have yet to receive guidance on e-safety appropriate to their age. This is also preventing pupils' behaviour and safety from being outstanding.

The leadership and management are good

- The school's headteacher has sustained the good level of progress achieved by pupils since the previous inspection and has shown a track record of improvement in teaching and in tackling any underachievement. An example of this has been the school's successful and thorough response to the disappointing results in the Year 1 phonics check.
- The headteacher has given more responsibility to her staff and they have responded with a fresh drive to improve achievement and the quality of teaching in their areas and classes. The school has detailed and rigorous systems to keep track of pupils' progress in each key subject area.
- The school checks teaching closely and leaders and governors have not been afraid to confront any underperformance. Good co-ordination of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' books and listening to pupils' views all contribute to an effective appraisal of the quality of teaching in the school. Leaders therefore have a particularly clear picture of where its strengths and areas for improvement lie.
- Pupils' positive attitudes to their learning are encouraged through a varied and exciting range of activities and subjects. As well as giving appropriate time to reading, writing and mathematics each class works on topics relating to history and geography, often carefully linked to skills in mathematics and English.
- Scientific experiments and projects on other faiths and cultures lead to an expanding knowledge and understanding of the world around them. An active lifestyle is promoted through healthy eating and every class has at least two sessions of physical education every week as well as regular swimming lessons for all pupils in Years 3 and 4. Both of these activities are supported by the additional primary school sports funding as are the regular visits by professional coaches.

These are having a positive impact on the pupils' well-being.

- The spiritual dimension of life is explored and celebrated through assemblies, religious education and in encouraging wonder and fascination with the world around us. Pupils frequently lead assemblies themselves and write their own prayers. Strong links with a school in West Africa help pupils to broaden their horizons and to understand the diversity of faiths and cultures.
- The school's communication with parents is generally good although some parents would like more information regarding homework. High quality support is given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and this includes working closely with their parents.
- Staff receive regular and relevant training, including being up to date with all safeguarding requirements, and this is often in conjunction with other local schools. The headteacher chairs a group of small schools, sharing resources and solutions. However, not enough is done to celebrate and disseminate outstanding practice.
- The local authority has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and recognises areas for improvement. It offers good support to the school through training, advice and guidance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- In the last six months there has been considerable change in the membership of the governing body, half of whom are new to their positions and with one vacancy still outstanding. In spite of this, governors are able to show a good understanding of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, and how pupils' test results compare to those of other, similar schools. They make regular visits to the school and are beginning to hold senior leaders more rigorously to account for progress in raising pupils' achievement. Governors know how the management of staff performance is helping to improve the quality of teaching and understand the link between staff salaries and the meeting of targets for pupils' progress and achievement. They know how the pupil premium is being used and the successful impact it is having on pupils' achievement. Governors are also undertaking training to improve their own skills as a matter of some urgency. They make sure that policies, including those relating to safeguarding pupils, are regularly reviewed and updated, and are generally implemented effectively. They recognise the need to improve the implementation of the school's homework policy. Governors closely supervise the school's finances, so that St Leonard's makes the best use of available resources.

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	124248
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	440605

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	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5-9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Stemp
Headteacher	Julie Lane
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2011
Telephone number	01785 712488
Email address	headteacher@st-leonards-dunston.staffs.sch.uk

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