

St Saviour's CofE (VC) Primary School

Congleton Road, Talke, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 1LW

Inspection dates 18–19 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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 make good progress from their starting points and, in 2013, attainment at the end of Year 6 was well above national levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good with a particular strength in the way teachers plan sessions suitable for individual pupils' different abilities. As a result, almost every pupil is making better than expected progress. The quality of marking and oral feedback to pupils is of very high quality.
- Pupils eligible for pupil premium funding make better progress than their peers as a result of carefully tailored activities and accurate monitoring.
- The school collects high-quality data on pupils' performance and uses it well to provide additional support where appropriate.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Behaviour is good. Where occasional incidents do occur they are resolved quickly.
- Having been through a period of change and managed this well, leadership is ambitious, proactive and focussed closely on the needs of pupils. Leaders act quickly to secure improvement. Governors have recently reorganised their work following a review; an open approach to challenge and change is securing rapid improvement.
- As an example of the increasingly high levels of expectation set throughout school, attendance, previously a concern, is now well above national levels.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There remains some variation in the quality of teaching with examples of sessions that
- Standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with the national figures.. Standards in reading have

required improvement alongside some that was outstanding.

- Governance has reorganised recently and added specialist expertise to the group. This is relatively new and will need to be evaluated in the near future to see how well it is working.

traditionally lagged behind writing but there is evidence that this is now catching up rapidly. This variation is a result of inconsistent levels of expectation.

Information about this inspection

- Every teacher was observed teaching during seven lesson observations. Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority, a group of governors and the senior leadership team. Meetings were held with the headteacher and with pupils.
- Key school documents were analysed, including the school improvement plan and pupil performance data.
- A detailed scrutiny of a sample of pupils' workbooks was carried out.
- There were too few replies on the school's Parent View website to be a representative sample but parents' views were considered following a recent detailed survey of opinion carried out by the school.
- A scrutiny of the school's procedures for safeguarding was conducted.

Inspection team

Ceri Morgan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is around twice the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care, and those with a parent in the armed services.
- There is a smaller than average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, and this varies considerably between year groups. In some year groups one pupil represents 12% of the cohort whilst in others it is closer to 3%. This means variation between year groups needs careful interpretation. Only a small number of pupils have statements of special educational needs. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has recently appointed a permanent headteacher following a term with an executive headteacher from a neighbouring school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out variation in the quality of teaching by making monitoring and observation visits more precise and less generic in nature. Do this by establishing a planned programme of monitoring to examine the impact of the recent literacy changes on reading within Key Stage 1 and ensuring that teachers' expectations are high enough in all classes.
- Improve attainment in reading by age 7 by ensuring that children read at length more often and monitoring that this takes place.
- Evaluate the impact of recent changes to governance on school improvement by:
 - checking to see how school improvement and pupil performance data is used by the governing body to set challenging targets for the school
 - planning an early review and a more detailed contribution by governors to the development of key school planning documents.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is **good**

- Pupils start school in the nursery with skills lower than might be expected for their ages in some cases. However, by the end of Year 6, in 2013, pupils left school with well above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress over pupils' time at the school. This also represents a significant improvement on previous performance.
- There is some variation, however, and pupils make swifter progress during their early years and later years with a plateau in the middle. This is being rapidly improved with some skilful teaching in Year 2 and the high outcomes are predicted to increase yet further in 2014. The current rigorous school system of monitoring pupils' achievement frequently, and acting swiftly to provide additional support where needed, gives confidence that the projections are likely to bear fruit.
- The school receives additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals (pupil premium funding). This is being spent highly effectively and to support these pupils in their writing skills. As a consequence, there is no significant gap in attainment between the groups.
- There is no significant difference in the performance of girls compared to boys although there are some small gaps in some classes. However, boys do well in their writing as a result of the school's focus on topics that appeal to all and the development of this into a curriculum for extended writing that is thoughtfully tailored to maintain high levels of interest. There are frequent examples throughout the school of extended writing using a wide range of expressive vocabulary. In one example, a pupil in Year 4 wrote about her forthcoming trip: 'I can't hold back the bubbles of excitement running through my body..'
- The school performs particularly well in mathematics. In 2013, pupils' attainment was well above national levels for all groups of pupils and many achieved the higher levels. In mathematics, pupils are taught the core skill of mental arithmetic well from an early age. As a result, they are comfortable manipulating number and applying this skill in problem-solving contexts. Pupils in nursery can count up to 25 and backwards confidently. Pupils in Year 1 can add and subtract two-digit numbers fluently without error and, by the end of Year 6, pupils can calculate using negative numbers, decimal notation to three places, and solve algebraic problems. This places the school well in readiness for the new mathematics curriculum in 2015. Pupils understand standard methods of calculation well, alongside opportunities to develop their own solutions to problems.
- This emphasis on number is also reinforced by a deep awareness of shape and space and the regular use of data in solving problems. In Year 6, for example, pupils can draw scattergrams accurately and then use them to interpret and form hypotheses.
- Over time, reading standards have lagged slightly behind those in writing, especially for the younger pupils. This issue is now being tackled, with an emphasis on a wide range of texts and special reading events such as sessions with authors. The outcome is a newly regenerated enthusiasm for books and reading aloud, carefully laced with innovative activities such as the use of tablet computers to share reading with each other. The school has implemented a new reading and writing scheme, which is proving the catalyst for rapid improvement.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given close support and, as a consequence, make good progress and achieve as well as their peers.

- The school spends its additional sports funding on extra-curricular activities such as gymnastics and dance. In addition, teachers received additional coaching in providing gymnastics classes. Occasional events, such as a dance day, are held alongside popular badminton classes. As a consequence, pupils have an enthusiasm for sport and greatly enjoy the sessions. They now want the same opportunities in music and art. They especially want a school choir, which is lacking at present.
- Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage and show confidence in their use of number and vocabulary. This makes induction into the reception class a smooth process.

The quality of teaching is **good**

- Teaching is good – with some examples of outstanding practice – but there is also some variation across the year groups, particularly in the levels of expectation about what pupils can achieve. Consequently, progression through the school can be uneven. This is especially true for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Key strengths are strong relationships with pupils which encourage a willingness on the part of children to 'have a go' without fear of failure. This is helping to secure higher standards. Teachers use resources well, including the innovative use of information and communication technology.
- The most critical element of the good teaching is the high attention to detail when planning lessons and how activities are closely matched to pupils' abilities. This means that the more able are given high levels of challenge and those who need additional support get it. As a result of this, progress of all is good.
- Teachers have a wide variety of teaching styles, including some formal and some more open and practical, which they can switch between, although switching between styles is less evident within lessons than between lessons. This means that, occasionally, teachers continue with what was planned whether or not it appears to be working. This is not commonplace, however.
- Questioning is frequent and of high quality – encouraging pupils to interact, discuss and then apply their knowledge. The quality of marking and assessment is especially good. Diligent, up-to-date and constructive, teachers routinely give pupils both encouragement and good advice on how to improve their work. There are very few examples of gratuitous smiley face rewards for routine work. This is helping to increase expectations yet further.
- Although these strengths are evident throughout, there remains some variation in teaching quality yet to be ironed out.
- Teachers use the support of a strong team of teaching assistants well in lessons.
- Teachers ensure that the social and moral development of pupils is well developed through a range of extra activities. Pupils also know about the context of others, thus developing their cultural awareness. There were examples of pupils seeing a spiritual element in their learning. For example, in one session, where pupils had to debate a 'big question' about whether or not we should 'take anything away from a beach', one pupil decided that we should not because 'we should leave Mother Nature alone'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils show an enthusiasm for learning and good attitudes to their studies. They are hardworking and keen to work even harder. They especially enjoy the active and practical sessions.
- Pupils are polite and supportive towards each other and to adults. There is the occasional falling out but these disagreements are few and far between, resolved quickly and amicably. Pupils say there is no bullying, no evidence of racist remarks and that pupils do not form cliques. They demonstrate a genuinely supportive ethos where all are respected.
- The school has introduced a new behaviour policy based on rewards for good behaviour as much as sanctions for naughtiness. This is consistently applied and is working. Pupils now eagerly anticipate their 'tea with teacher' if they behave well over time.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school places an appropriate emphasis on helping pupils to be knowledgeable about risk and thus avoid it, including online bullying, fire, water and healthy lifestyles. As a consequence, pupils show an up-to-date and effective awareness of how to keep safe. They say themselves that they feel safe.
- The school takes prompt and rigorous action to keep pupils safe and acts promptly when needed. All staff are checked before they are appointed, and records are maintained appropriately.
- A particular example of how the school has tackled potential problems well is the huge improvement in attendance. It is now well above national levels following a period of concern. This process has been well managed. One individual member of staff has overall responsibility for the improvement. Changes include the introduction of a range of procedures, including the appointment of new staff to liaise with families, text messaging services to alert families and careful and frequent monitoring of attendance.

The leadership and management is good

- Leadership has been through a period of change recently which has built on previous success. This period has been navigated well and used to refresh practices, especially at governance level, which is adding to the capacity to continue the improvements being seen. Senior leaders have contributed to this transition well by taking on additional responsibility.
- Senior leadership's contribution to monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance is especially strong. This is detailed, rigorous, accurate, frequent and methodical. As a consequence, it has contributed well to the drive for improvement. Much of the credit for this has been due to the work of the assistant headteacher who, during the period of change, which has not only continuity but strengthened the use of data throughout school.
- The newly appointed headteacher is both open to new ideas and ambitious, showing a detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses in a relatively short period and is already showing a steely determination to improve. She acts quickly and emphatically where appropriate; for example, making crucial improvements to school planning and strategic documentation .
- Leadership meetings are frequent and always have pupils' progress at their heart but are

occasionally informal in nature. This makes the job of governors in holding the school to account more complex.

- The school's leaders and managers are well aware of some aspects of provision that still need improving and have already put in place plans to do so. The clearest example of this is the need to refresh some of the fabric of the building, especially provision for outdoor learning for the youngest pupils.
- The local authority has brokered a governance review and the support of an executive headteacher to help steer the school through a period of change. This support has been both welcomed by the school and effective. It has contributed well to the school improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- At the suggestion of the local authority, governance underwent a review of practice in 2013. This was seen by the governors as an opportunity to make changes and triggered a fresh and innovative approach. As a consequence, there is a new committee structure and some additional personnel with particular expertise have joined the governing body. This has added rigour to the enthusiasm that already existed. Subject link governors are now asking questions about performance routinely, there are smaller and more effective decision-making groups and, consequently, policies are reviewed and implemented much more effectively. These changes have injected an element of appropriate challenge to the process of governance and are adding value to debate. However not all governors make a detailed contribution to shaping overall school improvement planning, but only review what is produced.

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	124255
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	431142

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Maintained
School category	Church of England, Voluntary controlled, Primary
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	144
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marina Weller
Headteacher	Lynn Davis
Date of previous school inspection	28 May 2012
Telephone number	01782 296700
Email address	office@st-saviours.staffs.sch.uk

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