

Thomas Barnes Primary School

School Lane, Hopwas, Tamworth, B78 3AD

Inspection dates

28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- From broadly average starting points, pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has risen year on year and is now well above average.
- Every group of pupils, including those supported by additional funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve equally well.
- As a result of dedicated and focused teaching, no pupil is left behind.
- This outstanding achievement has been sustained over the last three years because the headteacher has left no stone unturned in making sure pupils receive the best possible education.
- Her caring, outstanding leadership has moved a good school to the next level by setting high expectations of herself, the staff and all her pupils.
- Well-planned teaching provides the right amount of challenge to make learning interesting and exciting.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their varied and stimulating school life. Their consistently high attendance reflects this.
- Pupils' enjoyment of learning is infectious. Their outstanding attitudes and enthusiasm make sure that lessons get off to a prompt start and run smoothly. Pupils make the most of the time available.
- Pupils' books are neat, well presented and reflect the evident pride they have in their work.
- Pupils show sensitivity, care and respect towards each other and relationships are outstanding.
- Excellent behaviour and the school's rigorous focus on pupils' safety and well-being make the school a happy, secure environment in which to work and play.
- The governing body knows the school well and is effective in holding it to account so that any underperformance is swiftly identified and remedied.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding.
- Whilst pupils' cultural development is good, they do not have a strong enough awareness of different cultures beyond the school and are not fully prepared for life in a global society.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers hold the school in the highest regard.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in nine lessons in all four classes. Inspectors undertook two joint observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, members of the governing body and different groups of pupils. The lead inspector held a discussion with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, observed the teaching of reading skills and checked on pupils' reading in lessons.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work, scrutinised the school's records of pupils' progress and took account of the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The views of 30 parents and carers expressed in the online questionnaire (Parent View) were studied alongside the 37 returns to the school's own parental survey undertaken in 2013. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers at various times during the inspection.
- The school's own surveys of pupils' views, undertaken in the last year, were also scrutinised. Returns from 75 pupils in Years 1 to 5 and 10 from Year 6 leavers were considered during the inspection.
- The views of staff were sought through a questionnaire and 13 responses were considered.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Gordon Ewing, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Thomas Barnes is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The four classes within this school span seven year groups and some pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Others come from a range of different heritage groups. Few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A below-average number of pupils is eligible for support from the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for children who are looked after by the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very few pupils attend alternative provision on a part-time basis at the Lichfield Dyslexia Centre.
- The school is a member of the Tame Valley Co-operative Learning Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' awareness and understanding of other communities, faiths and cultures within Britain and beyond by:
 - developing links with schools serving multi-cultural communities in other localities in Britain
 - improving pupils' experience of other communities within Britain by increasing the range of visits to cultural centres and visitors to the school
 - extending links with schools and communities elsewhere in the world.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children join the Reception class with skills and abilities typical for their age. Pupils make outstanding progress from the moment they cross the threshold until they leave at the end of Year 6. There are some variations from year to year, mainly because of the small size of each year group.
- By the time pupils transfer to secondary education, they reach levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average. Attainment has been improved consistently since the last inspection as the headteacher's high expectations have made sure that standards have risen year on year.
- In the last two years, pupils' progress has compared very favourably with those seen nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, the school was in the top 20% of schools nationally for progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in the school are on track to match this outstanding performance.
- Achievement is outstanding for all groups of pupils. When any underperformance has been noted, action has been swift so that additional support and resources are deployed to close the gap. In 2013, pupils supported through the pupil premium were two terms behind peers in mathematics and writing and a year behind in reading. Prompt, focused intervention has ensured that this gap no longer exists in reading and writing. In mathematics, pupils supported by this additional funding are now achieving at levels above those of their classmates.
- More-able pupils make outstanding progress compared with similar pupils nationally. Year on year, more pupils are achieving the higher levels of which they are capable. This is because teachers cater well for their needs and some more-able younger pupils work alongside their older peers, for example, in mathematics.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is also outstanding. Well-designed learning activities, supplemented by one-to-one and small group support, help these learners to make secure, step-by-step progress alongside their peers.
- The few pupils attending alternative provision also make outstanding progress because the close working relationships established between the different teachers make sure that expectations remain high.
- Pupils' progress in reading has been boosted through improvements in the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and by vastly improving the quality and range of reading books. This is reflected in the above-average proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national phonics screening check in 2013. Pupils read widely and with confidence.
- Pupils achieve well across a range of other subjects, especially in music, physical education and sport. Considering the relatively small numbers on the school's roll, the pupils participate in an impressive range of sporting activities and competitions and are rightly very proud of their varied achievements.
- Achievement in physical education and sport has been especially boosted through the use of primary school sport funding and the growing partnership with a local sports college. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 receive weekly specialist coaching in a range of sports from orienteering and dance

to zumba and trampolining. Pupils reported that some of these opportunities have inspired them to take up more sport outside of school.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The consistently good and often outstanding teaching from the Reception year to Year 6 is built on teachers' high expectations of pupils and strengthened by the fact that every pupil is known as an individual. This leads to learning activities that are stimulating and set at the right level – not too easy and not too hard.
- This really effective practice has been achieved, particularly over the last three years, as teachers have risen to the challenge and vision set by the headteacher. Their dedication, commitment and energy have made sure that rapid progress and high levels of attainment have been sustained over time.
- Pupils' work shows that their writing is increasingly varied and advanced. Their calculations in mathematics show greater accuracy as well as increased use of different problem-solving strategies, especially when problems are more complex.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' work are as high in their topic books as they are in literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils' books are neat, well presented and show improvement in standards over time. Pupils are clearly proud of their work and are keen to share their endeavours with visitors and each other.
- Pupils arrive to lessons ready to learn. They settle quickly and their enthusiasm is readily tapped by teachers, who plan activities that swiftly engage their audience. In one class, pupils tested their classmates on literacy challenges, punctuating a complex sentence correctly using commas, semi-colons and apostrophes. Every pupil was thoroughly focused and their excellent writing skills were evident in their rapid, accurate answers.
- In the Reception class, the children were enthralled as the teacher revealed clues to a story they had studied recently. The children showed excellent memory of the characters and storyline. They showed a really good understanding of how to put instructions in order and to write simple steps in making a card for Mother's Day.
- Relationships are strong and no one is left to struggle with an activity or question for long because pupils freely help each other to understand a question or solve a problem. In some lessons, pupils use 'How I am Learning' cards that they leave on the desk so that the teacher can see that they are confident, not quite sure or confused. Prompt help is always at hand and, as a result, no pupil is left behind.
- Teachers' marking is positive, timely and constructive. Pupils know their targets and have a good understanding of how to take the next step to improve their work. Teachers make sure that pupils take note of the advice given and to respond when needed. That said, this is still not completely consistent across the school and, occasionally, the time invested in marking does not always bring the expected benefits.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school.
- Their attendance is consistently high and, in 2013, was in the top 20% of schools nationally. Pupils report that they really enjoy coming to school because 'lessons are different, fun and exciting.'
- The sense of community is palpable. Pupils see themselves as part of a family where everyone is ready to help. During the inspection, pupils willingly helped each other on a number of occasions, for example, when someone fell over in the playground, and when a partner was struggling with a sum in mathematics.
- As learners, pupils are resilient and determined to succeed. They persevere when they find something tricky and show patience and good levels of concentration when their classmates are explaining ideas.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe and show clear understanding of risks in school and in the outside world. They report that visiting speakers, such as from Childline, the fire service and the local community, have really helped them understand about the possible risks around them. They know how to respond to uninvited emails or text messages and show mature understanding of the dangers of the internet.
- Pupils report that bullying is practically non-existent and no pupil interviewed could recall a time when either they or a classmate had experienced bullying. Adults and pupils are ever vigilant in ensuring that everyone feels part of a very happy and cohesive community.
- Pupils do not see being part of a small school as a disadvantage. They see it as a strength. They judge that they experience a vast range of activities and opportunities that broaden their horizons because the whole school community works hard in providing visits, competitions and after school clubs. That said, they were less confident in showing their understanding of the customs, values and beliefs of other faiths and cultures both within modern Britain and in the wider global society.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- An astute comment from one parent, 'The school is now moving to the next level,' is a testament to the school's drive to improve on its good inspection outcome in 2010. Since then the appointment of the current headteacher has been the catalyst in accelerating the school to its outstanding status now.
- As an outstanding and caring leader, she has focused the work of the school on raising standards and accelerating progress to significantly better than what is found nationally. Sustained improvements in teaching and rigorous performance management are key factors in this school's success.
- Excellent training opportunities help new staff become confident and competent teachers as well as boosting the quality of teaching of longer-serving staff. A culture of 'How can we do this better?' makes sure that the school does not rest on its laurels.
- Teachers now have a secure and confident grasp on pupils' progress by using a broad range of

information to check learning regularly. Teachers are held to account for pupils' learning and progress data is used in setting teachers' performance objectives. Alongside this, the headteacher regularly observes teaching, checks pupils' books and examines teachers' planning. In partnership with staff, she has driven up the quality of teaching and learning year on year to their current outstanding levels.

- Leaders know the school exceptionally well and judge the school's performance using a range of information, including regularly sounding out the views of different groups of stakeholders. When any evidence of underperformance comes to light, action is swift. For example, when pupils in Year 3 were not making fast enough progress, additional support was brought to hand and, consequently, the gap is closing. Governors rightly linked the progress of this group of pupils to the headteacher's performance objectives.
- This same swift action is common when parents and carers express any concerns. One parent said that she was really impressed with the response of the school when a problem her daughter faced was brought to the staff's attention. A number of parents and carers described the staff as 'very approachable', having 'high expectations' and that the headteacher had made a 'brilliant impact,' since her appointment.
- Every pupil is treated as an individual and any form of discrimination is faced with zero tolerance. Each pupil has the opportunity to succeed academically and personally, and they do.
- As part of a very cohesive team of staff, middle leaders are playing their part in making this the school the best that it can be. For example, the coordinator of the Early Years Foundation Stage works tirelessly to ensure that new arrivals get off to a flying start. The physical education coordinator is building the school's capacity to improve pupils' attitudes to sports and healthy lifestyles by strengthening the partnership with the local sports college using the new funding provided by the government.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. A vibrant curriculum engages and motivates pupils to do their best. Culturally, pupils lack an in-depth understanding of some communities and cultures within and beyond British shores. Nonetheless, cultural development is good overall.
- All leaders, including governors, ensure that procedures to safeguard staff and pupils are excellent.
- The local authority rightly judges the school as outstanding and provides effective but low levels of support, particularly now the school has joined the Tame Valley Community Learning Trust.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes a strong strategic lead. Governors bring a range of expertise and experience to the school. They know the school well because they are close to the school community and take an active interest in the day-to-day life of the school. They take a keen interest in the tracking of both pupils' and teachers' performance and are not shy in asking leaders astute questions about the progress of key groups of pupils. They make sure that teachers' salary increases are approved solely on good performance. Governors have a watchful eye over the allocation of the pupil premium funding but they are still getting to grips with strategies to track very closely the impact of this funding on pupils' progress. They rightly appreciate the endeavours and transparency of the headteacher in the provision of detailed analysis of much of the school's work. Governors attend a range of highly regarded training courses that are strengthening their existing good capacity to move the school further forward.

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	124087
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	440599

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	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Robins
Headteacher	Kelly Williams
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2010
Telephone number	01827 475683
Fax number	01827 475683
Email address	office@thomasbarnes.staffs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

