

Stoneydelph Primary School

Crowden Road, Wilnecote, Tamworth, B77 4LS

Inspection dates 21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Leaders at all levels do not ensure that pupils achieve well across the school. Standards are below average in Year 6 because few pupils achieve the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs underachieve. They are not always supported well in lessons.
- Pupils do not have enough good opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Teachers do not make good use of assessment information to set pupils, especially the more able, challenging work.
- Teachers do not mark pupils' work well enough to help pupils avoid making mistakes.
- Pupils do not have good enough opportunities to learn about diverse faiths and cultures.
- Senior leaders' judgements about the school's work are too generous. This reduces the effectiveness of some of the actions they take to improve the school.
- Some middle leaders are not well enough prepared for their roles.
- The school's methods of assessing and checking the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are not precise enough. This means that the teaching these pupils receive is not always matched well to their needs.
- The governing body does not check all aspects of the school's work robustly enough. This means it is not playing a fully effective role in directing the school's work.

The school has the following strengths

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Children in the Nursery and Reception years are better taught than most older pupils, so they achieve well.
- Training and partnership work have improved some aspects of leadership and teaching.
- Most pupils are now making good progress in reading.
- Leaders are working successfully to close gaps in attainment for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Staff look after them well and make sure they are safe. Attendance is improving.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching during visits to classrooms to check on pupils’ learning. On three visits, they were accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors heard some pupils in Year 2 reading and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Meetings were held with school staff, a group of pupils, five members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 questionnaires completed by staff and the 15 responses made by parents to Ofsted’s online questionnaire, Parent View. They also looked at parents’ responses to the school’s recent questionnaire. An inspector spoke to some parents informally during the inspection.
- Inspectors checked a range of evidence including: monitoring records; consultants’ reports; the school improvement plans; the school’s own data on pupils’ attainment and progress; and policies, procedures and practice relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Derek Aitken, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carolyn Lewis

Additional Inspector

Jan Bird

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two part-time Nursery classes in the mornings and afternoons, and full time in two Reception classes.
- Stoney Tots Daycare, which provides pre-school education for three-year-old children and wraparound care for Nursery children, was privately managed until September 2014. It is now run by the governing body and was observed as part of this inspection.
- The specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs (the hearing impaired unit) which was operating at the time of the previous inspection, closed last year.
- Most pupils are White British. Around one in ten of the pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, is well above average at nearly half.
- At one in five, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is slightly above average.
- More pupils than is usually the case join or leave the school partway through their primary education.
- The school has experienced some discontinuity in staffing in the last two years. The leadership team is currently being restructured.
- The school works in partnership with a range of schools in the Tame Valley Cooperative Learning Trust. In addition, it has been supported recently by a former headteacher, a Local Leader of Education.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment data rigorously to set suitably challenging work for all pupils, especially the more able
 - teachers carefully mark pupils' work in writing and mathematics to help them to eliminate persistent mistakes
 - teaching assistants know the precise steps in learning that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have to take next, so that they meet their targets and develop their understanding.
- Improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics by providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects.
- Improve pupils' cultural development by providing pupils with opportunities to learn about diverse faiths and cultures.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on teaching and pupils' achievement by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders assess the quality of teaching rigorously and take full account of what data tell them about pupils' achievement across key stages to help them evaluate robustly all aspects of the school's work
 - subject and other middle leaders are better prepared for their leadership roles
 - staff use tight assessment, tracking and monitoring systems to direct teaching for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs
 - the governing body quickly strengthens the ways in which it checks the school's work to enable it to play a more prominent role in school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Restructuring of the leadership team, which started in September 2014, is incomplete and a few new roles and responsibilities are not firmly established. The school has not always prepared staff adequately to undertake leadership roles, and vacancies have not always been filled in a timely way when they have arisen.
- As a result of this lack of a clearly defined leadership structure, the impact of subject leadership is uneven. Provision in English, for example, has been developed more effectively than that in mathematics.
- Too little progress has been made in developing provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The register of these pupils has been revised but assessment and tracking procedures are not precise enough to make sure that teaching matches their needs. The effectiveness of their support programmes is not checked closely. The school ensures that there is no discrimination and looks after the pastoral needs of these pupils well but it does not promote equal opportunities fully in respect of their achievement.
- Action plans show that senior leaders have a clear understanding of the immediate priorities for raising pupils' achievement. Suitable arrangements have been made for appraising the performance of staff. Information from this process has been used well to spread good practice in the teaching of early reading skills. However, senior leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching and of the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress are too generous.
- Senior leaders seek actively to improve the school. They diligently follow the advice of external consultants on several matters, including assessment practice. They are working with other schools in the Tame Valley Cooperative Learning Trust in researching alternative methods of assessment. The school is in the early stages of working towards its preferred system for assessment following withdrawal of National Curriculum levels.
- Leaders have a lot of information about pupils' performance. They use assessment data appropriately in most respects to check pupils' performance in different year groups to identify pupils who need extra help with their learning. Pupil premium funding is being used effectively, for example, to provide extra staffing and teaching time, to help relevant pupils close gaps in attainment.
- The school's curriculum provides adequate breadth and balance. Useful adjustments have been made to improve rates of progress for most pupils, although Year 6 did not benefit from this in 2014, when their progress was generally too slow. Pupils have few good opportunities to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Leaders audited pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development two years ago. In common with their Trust partners, they implemented an action plan to ensure that the vision and values embodied in the school's award of 'Unicef Rights Respecting School' are threaded through the curriculum. Successful actions taken, such as an anti-bullying project, an enhanced school council and themed assemblies have ensured good outcomes for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Pupils participate in community projects. They take on posts of responsibility in school and elect school councillors. These activities broaden their horizons and provide them with insight into the workings of democracy. Their experience of diverse cultures and faiths in, and beyond Britain, is, however, limited.
- The local authority has been effective in supporting the school through suitably targeted training, advice and guidance. It has been less successful in holding leaders to account for the judgements they make on the school's performance.
- Training has led to clear improvements in the effectiveness of some leaders with key responsibilities. This is reflected, for example, in the strengths of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils' rising achievement in reading this year.

■ The national primary school sport funding has been spent appropriately on improving the skills of staff through team-teaching exercises led by external providers. Pupils have access to a wider range of physical education activities, including basketball and kwik cricket. Staff assess the impact of this input on pupils' skills through progression charts. They review the impact on their own expertise through self-assessment. However, pupils' participation rates in sport are unrecorded and the self-assessments of staff are not verified.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors share the senior leaders' ambition to improve their practice. The governing body commissioned an external review of its effectiveness and this was conducted in September 2014. This review highlighted, as a strength, the prudent ways in which governors manage the school's finances. The review also outlined, as a focus for an action plan, some development points. These were designed to extend governors' roles in monitoring the school's performance and to help them to hold senior leaders more rigorously to account. However, the action plan has not been implemented. Recent resignations from the governing body and difficulties encountered in recruiting new governors to fill the vacancies have delayed the construction of a planned audit of governors' skills. The governing body is now reconstituting itself. Much of its work is currently being undertaken by the Chair of the Governing Body, assisted by a small core of committed governors.
- Governors are provided with a great deal of data on pupils' achievement. They know how well pupils in different year groups are performing. The detail of the information sometimes obscures their overview of achievement across the key stages. Nonetheless, they use their financial skills effectively to direct funds to support initiatives designed to improve teaching and to raise achievement. These include employing extra staff to reduce class sizes, which has contributed to an acceleration of the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors have an adequate overview of the quality of teaching. They ask senior leaders many pertinent questions about teaching and pupils' achievement. However, they are too reliant on evaluations provided by the headteacher and external consultants. They usually ensure that salary increases are merited and that targets for the headteacher's performance are met.
- The governing body ensures that current government requirements for safeguarding are fully met and that safeguarding arrangements are effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils build effectively on the good habits they acquire in the Nursery and Reception years. They are positive about their learning experiences and recognise the improvements in the progress they are making in the key subjects. Most pupils take pride in presenting their work.
- Pupils respect adults and relate well to staff. They follow their instructions promptly and know the difference between right and wrong. They treat each other kindly and play harmoniously. They behave responsibly in all areas of the school and fulfil their roles as class monitors and councillors conscientiously.
- The school's behaviour policy is detailed, with clear advice given to staff on staged rewards as well as punishment procedures. Positive learning behaviour is emphasised and strategies to promote this are outlined. Pupils report that sanctions are applied consistently. Parents are confident that pupils behave well and that staff respond suitably to occurrences of poor behaviour.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other on group or paired tasks led by staff but, on a few occasions, they lack the drive to work hard when working on their own.
- Until recently, the school's work to improve attendance has been hampered by the non-availability of an education welfare officer. The recently appointed officer is working effectively with the school to raise attendance and to reduce lateness. The school's attendance has risen by 1%, is broadly average, and is currently meeting the local authority's target. Lateness has reduced by 30%.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Visitors from the community police and topics covered in computing lessons encourage pupils to think carefully about how they might engage with others online and how to avoid questionable activities, such as playing games on consoles with strangers.
- Pupils understand that bullying takes different forms, including physical and verbal. They know that they should speak up if they receive unpleasant text messages. Pupils report that bullying is rare and, if it does occur, it is dealt with effectively.
- Leaders ensure that the required number of qualified first aiders is available to deal with any accidents. Staff training on safeguarding is up to date and staff are well aware of their responsibilities in this matter.
- Detailed, thorough, case studies show that the school works very effectively with external agencies to identify the needs of vulnerable pupils and to seek solutions towards overcoming them. Other documentation, such as risk assessments, demonstrates that the school anticipates possible hazards to pupils' safety – for example, on residential visits – and takes appropriate actions to guard against them.
- Behaviour records show, over time, a sharp drop in incidents involving aggression, disrespectful behaviour and alleged bullying. The number of pupils who were excluded for short periods fell last year. There were no recorded racial incidents last year.
- Specially trained staff manage pupils in the afternoon nurture group (the 1 o'clock club) very skilfully. They ensure clear gains in pupils' social skills and self-esteem which support them when they subsequently work in their normal classes.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not ensured that pupils achieve well. Discontinuities in staffing, for example, due to staff leaving to take up posts in other schools and absence due to illness, have interrupted pupils' education at vital points in the school year.
- Teachers have been equipped recently with up-to-date, class profiles of their pupils' attainment and progress. They are not yet using this information consistently well to set their short-term targets for pupils or to focus lesson activities precisely on the knowledge and skills that groups need to acquire or practise next. Pupils, particularly the more-able pupils, are therefore not moved on quickly enough to the more challenging work they need to do to ensure good progress.
- Technical aspects of writing, such as spelling and handwriting, are not always developed systematically. Teachers do not regularly model good handwriting in their marking. Mistakes in pupils' letter formation and the spelling of key words are sometimes not rectified quickly enough. Lower-attaining pupils are not consistently supported well to help them develop their ideas.
- Similarly, in mathematics, although books are regularly marked, errors – for example in number formation made by pupils in Key Stage 1 – are not routinely followed up and this sometimes leads to repeated mistakes in pupils' calculations.
- In some lessons, teachers make good use of teaching assistants to support lower-attaining pupils. Teaching assistants work less successfully with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They sometimes lack precise knowledge of the short steps these pupils need to take to meet their targets and focus more on pupils completing tasks rather than on developing their understanding.
- Reading skills are mostly taught well and this is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The timetable has been adapted to provide more and better opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, for example, in guided reading lessons. This is enabling pupils in Key Stage 2 to build more securely on their better understanding of phonics and improved attainment in Key Stage 1.

- Teachers manage pupils well and provide them with work which they enjoy. There is evidence that teaching is improving, with good elements in all key stages, and of an increasing range of practical approaches to support teaching in mathematics. This, in part, results from the productive collaborative activities the school has established with its Trust partners to improve teachers' expertise.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 6 slipped to below average in 2014. The percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics improved, but few pupils reached the higher Level 5 in these subjects. Pupils who joined the school in Year 5 or Year 6 reached lower standards than their classmates at Level 4 but made similar progress over their time in school.
- Pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, do not make fast enough progress, especially in writing and mathematics. This means they are not able to work at the more challenging levels which reflect higher standards. Some gaps in attainment remain between boys and girls in writing and mathematics. Some disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not make the progress they should because they are not well enough supported.
- In 2014, on average, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were working about four terms behind their classmates in mathematics and four and a half terms behind other pupils nationally. They were working three and a half terms behind their classmates in reading and four and a half terms behind in writing. They were four terms behind other pupils nationally in reading and writing. These gaps in attainment had widened considerably since 2013. Currently, in Year 6 and across most year groups in Key Stage 2, the gaps in attainment are much reduced.
- Some of the most-able pupils are not given good opportunities to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills over a sustained period of time. Sometimes they work below their capabilities in lessons, partly because they have not been prepared well enough for the tasks which they undertake.
- Pupils' attainment in mathematics is improving because they now have better opportunities in mathematics lessons to apply their reasoning skills to solving problems. However, pupils do not always consider alternative ways to find suitable solutions. There are few, planned opportunities for them to practise their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is now rising but weaknesses in handwriting and spelling hold back pupils' progress. Cursive handwriting has been a focus of the work of staff in Key Stage 1 this year but some pupils still use a mixture of cursive script and block capitals in their writing. Most pupils respond well to the imaginative writing tasks they are given in literacy lessons, but there are few, well-planned opportunities for them to develop their skills across the curriculum.
- Standards are improving in Key Stage 1. Until this year, pupils joined Year 1 with below-average attainment. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2014 rose to average and this improvement is currently being maintained. Disadvantaged pupils consistently outperform their classmates.
- Results in the Year 1 screening check for phonics (the sounds that letters make) rose in 2014 and were close to the national average. Reading standards have improved in Year 2 and most pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making good progress in this skill.

The early years provision is good

- Most children's skills are below those typical for their age on entry to the Nursery. They make good progress, especially in the Reception year. The percentage of children who reached a good level of development rose sharply in 2014 and slightly exceeded the national average. Most groups, including disadvantaged children, achieved well. This ensures that children are well prepared for Year 1.

- Good leadership ensures that expectations for children’s progress and welfare are strong. Children benefit from a wide range of stimulating activities. They engage with tasks positively and are keen to learn. They enjoy opportunities to explain what they are doing, although they are not always clear about how they can improve their work. They show good levels of independence in their selection of resources and in their willingness to see tasks through to completion. They demonstrate a good level of self-care skills, for example, in putting on and taking off their coats.
- Staff use praise and encouragement well to reinforce children’s self-esteem and confidence. Children are well cared for and staff ensure their good behaviour and safety. Relationships are warm and positive, and children follow routines and the instructions of staff. Children share resources and equipment with each other cooperatively. Staff model good listening habits well and adapt their questions skilfully in the light of children’s responses.
- Staff teach phonics systematically, using methods, resources and short activities, such as ‘beat the clock’, which sustain children’s interest. Staff observe children’s articulation of separate sounds closely. They step in quickly with useful verbal feedback and guidance to help children blend sounds into words. This also enables children to recognise contracted forms of words, to decode the meaning of phrases and to retrieve information from short reading passages accurately.
- Staff provide children with interesting activities to apply new learning, as was observed, for example when children excitedly reviewed photographs from their ‘Shrek Hunt’. They identified fairy-tale creatures correctly, and recollected the recurring rhymes from The Gingerbread Man and The Three Little Pigs.
- Staff use assessment well to track children’s achievement over time and to decide next steps in their learning. Most activities are planned very carefully to enable children to develop their creative talents and to allow them to demonstrate their skills across all areas of learning. On a few occasions, individual more-able children are not challenged sufficiently while working on their self-chosen tasks.
- Day care provision reflects the positive features seen in the Nursery and Reception years. Shared observations and planning ensure consistency in approach across the settings. This reinforces the useful work Nursery and Reception staff do with parents to prepare their children for school. It also eases children’s transition to the Nursery and supports their good development during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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	124179
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	453499

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Price
Headteacher	Jenny Wallbank
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2013
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