

Western Springs Primary School

School Road, Rugeley, WS15 2PD

Inspection dates

28–29 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. Their achievement is good.
- Teaching is effective and pupils currently in the school are making good progress. Standards in all year groups have risen and are now at least in line with those expected for pupils' ages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The progress of each individual pupil is checked very carefully. This enables adults to provide prompt support for any pupil identified as in danger of falling behind.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and throughout the school day. They are polite and courteous towards adults and each other.
- The school's leaders have taken effective steps to deal with some challenging behavioural from a small number of pupils. This has been achieved through consistent and effective behaviour management from all adults.
- Pupils are kept safe in school. Adults are vigilant and intervene quickly if they feel any child is at risk.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well, and this underpins much of the work of the school.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It is very strong on raising pupils' awareness of a range of world issues. It provides pupils with first-hand experiences to help them learn.
- Leaders are effective in ensuring good teaching in all classes so pupils make good progress. They tackle and deal quickly and effectively with any underperformance.
- Governors know the school and the community well. They play an important role in helping staff deal with difficult issues so that the school can continue to provide a good quality of education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to extend fully their understanding in reading, develop early writing skills rapidly and solve mathematical problems.
- Although attendance is improving, leaders have not yet done enough to make sure it is consistently as high as possible.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in five lessons. One was carried out jointly with the headteacher. During observations, the inspector had the opportunity to look carefully at pupils' work in their books to assess the rates of progress pupils were making in the current school year. He listened to pupils reading during lesson observations.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed and discussed.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and pupils. A conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Questionnaire responses from five members of staff were analysed.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for them to be published. Inspectors looked at the results of the school's recent questionnaires, giving parents' views.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Children in Reception attend full-time. Pupils are taught in single-age classes in the early years and Key Stage 1. They are taught in mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small minority come from a range of minority ethnic groups, including Romanian, Czech, Polish and Afro-Caribbean. Almost none speak English as an additional language.
- At 45%, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average at 35%.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governors run a breakfast club on the school site, and this was included in this inspection.
- There is a pre-school, Little Springs Academy, offering places for pre-school children from birth. This is subject to a separate inspection.
- Western Springs Primary is part of The Chase Cooperative Learning Trust, which meets regularly to discuss the progress and performance of its schools. The schools work together in supporting staff development, checking the assessment of pupils' work, and other activities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by focusing on:
 - improving pupils' understanding of what they read in different subjects
 - developing children's early writing skills to provide a secure basis on which pupils can achieve higher standards in writing
 - improving pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics and other subjects.
- Improve attendance further by rigorously implementing the initiatives in the new attendance policy and monitoring the impact of actions taken.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the school's last inspection, the senior leaders have succeeded in recreating an environment in which good teaching, achievement and behaviour are the norm. Their decisive and effective action to tackle some difficult issues that affected pupils' behaviour and achievement in 2014 demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders base their regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning on lesson observations, work scrutiny, discussions with pupils and detailed checks on individual pupils' progress. This gives them a clear picture of what needs to improve. Clear feedback and demanding targets help teachers and teaching assistants to meet leaders' high expectations and help pupils to achieve well.
- Subject leaders and those supporting vulnerable pupils are effective in their work. They work alongside senior leaders to check quality and standards, and to devise action plans for improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. Pupils take responsibility around the school and help one another. Pupils' good social and moral development is shown by their good behaviour and positive attitudes to each other.
- The curriculum gives pupils excellent opportunities to learn about life in modern Britain, how democratic processes have developed, and how it compares to other countries. The global aspects of the curriculum earned the school the gold International Schools Award in 2010 and 2013 and prepare pupils well for life outside school.
- Although there are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, the school actively discourages discrimination of any kind. Pupils experience first-hand learning through regular visits out of school and through the 'Forest School', in which they learn outdoors with an emphasis on their social and emotional development. Through these aspects of the school's work, leaders take great care to ensure that all pupils have an equality opportunity to succeed.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support academic progress and to help remove the personal and emotional barriers to learning experienced by disadvantaged pupils. Eligible pupils receive one-to-one and small-group support to help them catch up, including very effective experiences in the Forest School. A range of activities support pupils' personal and emotional needs, including access to a behaviour mentor and rigorous chasing up of absence from school.
- The school has made effective arrangements for spending the primary sports funding. Qualified sports coaches lead lessons so teachers observe specialist practice to help them improve their own teaching skills. Sports competitions and out-of-school clubs widen pupils' opportunities to take part in sports.
- The local authority has had little impact on school improvement, having regarded the school as requiring low-level intervention. It has worked with the school to help resolve the placement of pupils with complex special educational needs. The new 'improvement partner' is in the process of making arrangements to work more closely with the school following last year's dip in pupils' progress. The school has worked closely with other local schools through its membership of The Chase Cooperative Learning Trust and has received much support through this partnership.
- Over the last two years, leaders have had to manage the extreme behaviour of a few pupils with complex special educational needs who have not managed to succeed in other schools. The rate of exclusion over this period was exceptionally high and standards were affected, which gave a misleading impression of behaviour and achievement in the school. This led to a monitoring visit by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors in November 2014. The senior leaders responded positively to the recommendations following the visit, and the situation is resolved now. Some of the pupils have moved on to specialised education settings. Attendance is improving through better monitoring and effective action, although it has not yet risen enough. The rate of exclusion has fallen drastically, all adults are now effective in supporting pupils'

behaviour, and leaders monitor carefully patterns of behaviour to deal with any issues.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are effective in challenging the school and holding leaders to account for its performance. They support the headteacher and senior leaders in dealing with difficult issues.
- Governors know the school well through detailed headteacher's reports and through visiting the school for themselves. Links with staff help governors develop a good understanding of how well teachers and teaching assistants are doing their jobs.
- Governors understand assessment data and are aware of how the achievement of pupils compares with other schools. They know that achievement dipped last year and the reasons why, and that it has now improved. They have a deep understanding of the community served by the school and use their knowledge effectively to help guide the school in meeting community needs.
- Governors set clear targets to manage the effectiveness of the headteacher and staff. They make sure that teachers' pay increases are closely linked to competence and evidence of their impact on pupils' achievement.
- Governors make sure that all statutory requirements are met, including through effective safeguarding practices.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Lessons are rarely interrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Behaviour at break times, lunchtimes and during assembly times is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and speak well about the interesting and enjoyable lessons. They feel they are making good progress in their work. They say there is some 'silly' behaviour at break times, but nothing that really worries them.
- The number of exclusions has fallen considerably. In 2012 and 2013, the exclusion rate was very high as a result of decisive action to address extreme behaviour. It is now very low.
- Attendance is improving. During the term before the inspection, it was much higher than in the same period last year. The number of pupils regularly away from school has fallen significantly and the proportions with above-average attendance have sharply increased. Leaders have introduced new strategies, in conjunction with the Chase Cooperative Learning Trust and the Welfare Officer, to achieve their target of above-average attendance, but they have not yet had a full impact. Pupils arrive at school on time.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They are knowledgeable about the different forms bullying can take, including on social networking sites, and say that there are very few incidents, if any. They are confident that any issues that worry them will be dealt with quickly and effectively. They have a good understanding of internet safety.
- Pupils receive good care in the breakfast club at the beginning of each day.
- Child protection is a strong aspect of the school's work. Staff training is up to date. Adults are vigilant and intervene if concerned. The school is effective in supporting pupils and their families so that pupils develop confidence and are ready to learn. Staff have excellent professional contacts, including through the Learning Trust, and make referrals to outside agencies when necessary. Parents value highly the support given to them and their children.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers ensure that all pupils in single- and mixed-age classes are provided with work that builds on their previous learning. Teachers carefully check each pupil's progress and use information carefully to

plan activities that help pupils to develop their skills and knowledge.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They ask carefully planned questions to guide pupils to think things out for themselves. Teachers have benefited from working alongside physical education coaches, and teaching in physical education lessons helps pupils make good progress.
- Teachers take great care to celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils' work from a range of different subjects and activities is carefully displayed in classrooms, corridors and the school hall. This gives a positive message to pupils, who try hard to produce good-quality work.
- Teachers' marking is effective in helping pupils to improve their work. Teachers identify areas of strength, but also make clear suggestions about what pupils should do to reach the next level. There is clear evidence that pupils correct their mistakes.
- Behaviour is managed well. Procedures are consistent from class to class so pupils have a good understanding of rewards and the consequences of making wrong choices. Teachers and teaching assistants are consistent in helping pupils to see the value of good behaviour.
- Teaching assistants have a positive impact in supporting disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils. They know each pupil well and have good skills in helping pupils to improve their work. Teaching assistants are fully involved in the process of lesson planning so are very clear about what they are expected to do to help pupils learn.
- Literacy is taught well. Children learn how to read from a very early age, learning phonics (letters and the sounds they make) in Reception. This creates a secure foundation on which to build future learning. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 do not have enough opportunities to acquire more highly developed reading skills, such as understanding and using text to answer questions and widen their vocabulary.
- Teachers take care to ensure that pupils have secure understanding of number and calculation. However, they give pupils few opportunities to use and apply their numeracy skills through investigating and solving problems in mathematics and other subjects.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has quickly improved over the last year. It is now back to the good level reported at the time of the school's last inspection. All groups of pupils make equally good progress.
- Children start in Reception with attainment below that typical for their age. Particularly weak areas include their writing, and personal, social and emotional development. Children make good progress but attainment on transfer into Year 1 is still below average in literacy. Children make particularly good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- In Key Stage 1, achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good. Attainment has been rising steadily at the end of Year 2 and is now average. This represents good progress from the pupils' below-average starting points.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening were good last year. The few pupils who did not reach the nationally expected standard have already improved to the required level.
- Pupils' achievement in 2014 dipped to significantly below the nationally expected level in writing and mathematics. The school provided for a small group of pupils with complex special educational needs, whose moves from other schools were arranged in collaboration with the local authority. The poor behaviour of these few pupils had a significant, but temporary, impact on achievement overall. Attainment remained at the same level as in previous years, but their poor progress meant that the anticipated improvement was not achieved last year.

- In Key Stage 2, achievement is now good. In all year groups, attainment in reading and mathematics is above that expected for pupils' age, with high proportions at the expected level for their age and good numbers exceeding this. In writing, attainment is at age-expected levels, but this represents good progress from the pupils' lower starting points.
- The most-able pupils are now making good progress in all year groups. An above-average proportion are making more than expected progress to reach the higher levels in reading and mathematics, with an average proportion reaching the higher levels in writing. In 2014, achievement for this group was not as good and the proportions achieving the higher levels were lower than seen nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding usually do well. In 2012 and 2013, gaps with other pupils in school were closed. Their attainment was higher than that of their classmates, although about a year behind pupils nationally. In 2014, gaps widened in line with a drop in overall achievement. In mathematics, they were two terms behind other pupils and just over a year behind other pupils nationally. In reading, they were four terms behind others and almost a year behind pupils nationally. In writing, they were about half a term ahead of others but just over two terms behind pupils nationally. School data show that, currently, disadvantaged pupils are making similar good progress to others and working at the levels expected for their age.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics because of effective and targeted support. Last year, they made slower than expected progress due to behavioural issues. Currently, better progress is evident. Staff make sure they are fully prepared to learn alongside other pupils.
- In reading, older pupils do not have a good understanding of what they read, and younger children in Reception are not challenged enough to develop good early writing skills. In mathematics, pupils are not fully competent in applying their knowledge and understanding to solve problems.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years is good. Adults work as an effective team. Teaching assistants are well deployed and play an important role in helping children to achieve well. Children's achievements are carefully checked and activities are planned, using these checks, to move them on quickly to the next level of learning. Consequently, children of different abilities progress well, particularly in developing confidence and social skills.
- Children behave well. They get on well with each other and work together in a calm and busy manner. They quickly respond to adults' requests, and listen politely to adults and each other. Adults are vigilant with regard to safety, so children are safe and secure during all activities.
- Children focus well during adult-led activities, whether in a formal literacy or numeracy session, or informally, reading a book with an adult. They feel comfortable working with the adults and concentrate for lengthy periods.
- Children's use of imagination develops well under careful adult guidance. They respond enthusiastically to the wide range of interesting learning opportunities. Children interact well with adults and begin to make choices. Children respond quickly to adult direction and engage in effective learning.
- When children choose their own activities, adults talk purposefully with them to extend learning and encourage their curiosity. Consequently children's speech develops well, but, because of their low starting points, they do not become fully confident speakers. Writing also remains a weak area at the end of the Reception Year as adults do not place enough focus on developing children's early writing skills.

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	124125
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	455544

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Walsh
Headteacher	Shirley Wellings
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2012
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