

Betley CofE VC Primary School

Church Lane, Betley, Crewe, CW3 9AX

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

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

- The headteacher provides good leadership. Her high expectations of pupils are very effectively communicated to, and shared by, staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- The school has been improved since it became part of a federation with another local primary school.
- The senior, subject and other leaders know the school inside out. They know exactly what needs to be improved and waste no time in addressing any weaknesses that come to light.
- From last year's broadly average results at Key Stage 2, attainment is rising. In the current Year 6, in reading, writing, mathematics, all pupils are on track to attain the nationally expected Level 4 and more than half are on track to attain the higher Level 5.
- Children in the early years make good progress. They develop an eagerness to learn and achieve well.
- The most-able pupils are doing much better than previously, and are achieving well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Every effort is made to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The school strongly promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development throughout the curriculum.
- Pupils feel extremely safe in school. Their behaviour is exemplary and they have highly positive attitudes towards learning. Members of staff form good relationships with them and set a good example.
- Actions taken by school leaders and governors have led to the development of a strong new team of staff. Hence, teaching has improved much in a short period of time and is now good.
- Pupils are given high-quality feedback about how well they are doing and how they can improve. This is helping pupils to make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On occasion, teachers do not set the most-able pupils activities which enable them to make as much progress as they could.
- Pupils' writing skills are not as consistently well developed as those in reading.
- In the early years, the limited size and quality of the outdoor area restricts opportunities for learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, and talked to pupils about their progress and the work in their exercise books. Two visits to classrooms were undertaken jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also looked at work in the early years and Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The inspector heard pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 read, observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes, lunchtime and at the beginning and end of the school day. He also talked to a group of Key Stage 2 pupils about behaviour and safety.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, and with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The responses of 50 parents to Ofsted's online Parent View survey were taken into account, alongside comments made to the inspector by parents before and after school. The views of staff were also taken into account, as were the 13 completed staff questionnaire returns.
- Various school documents were examined. These included: external evaluations of the school's work; reports to the governing body by the local authority school improvement service and the school's independent consultants. The inspector analysed data on pupils' progress and records of pupils' attendance. He considered the school's review of its own performance, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Terrance Mortimer, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Betley Primary is a much smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The Nursery children attend part time in the autumn term and then full time from January onwards. Children attend the Reception class full time. From September 2015 the children in nursery have the option to be full time all year round.
- All classes have two-year groups.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds; a very small minority are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils previously known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well below the national average.
- 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.
- Since January 2015, an executive headteacher has been responsible for the school. She is also the headteacher of St. Luke's CE Primary, Newcastle Under Lyme, Staffordshire. The school has entered into a partnership, known as a soft federation. Both schools are under the leadership of the executive headteacher but with separate governing bodies. The senior teacher of Betley School manages the school on a day-to-day basis.
- Other staff from St Luke's Primary have provided specialist support to leadership at different levels and to improve systems for the early years.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club which is privately run and did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise attainment by:
 - making sure that the most-able pupils are always set work with sufficient challenge for them to achieve their best in lessons
 - developing the pupils' writing skills more quickly so that they make better progress across the school.
- Improve learning and progress in early years by developing the outdoor area and increasing the opportunities and space for children to explore and learn.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has established a senior leadership team with clear terms of reference and re-defined responsibilities. The soft federation provides an effective framework that is contributing well to improvements at Betley Primary School since its inception.
- Staff and governors form a cohesive team who passionately share the headteacher's ambition for the school's pupils and communicate high expectations to both staff and pupils. As a result, the school is moving forward rapidly. Senior leaders and governors are realistic in their evaluations of the school's effectiveness, strengths and priorities for improvement.
- The governors work closely and productively with senior leaders in monitoring all aspects of the school's work. The enthusiasm of the headteacher has created a strong staff team with high morale.
- Subject leaders, including the early years leader, are becoming increasingly effective in their roles in coordinating and monitoring teachers' work, and sharing expertise across the federation. As a result of these effective leadership arrangements, the school is now improving at a much more consistent rate than in the past.
- Leaders have an accurate picture of the school's overall effectiveness. Their self-evaluation is based securely upon robust monitoring of all aspects of the school's work. The leadership of teaching is consistently strong.
- New assessment systems have meant that a close and accurate eye is kept on pupils' progress. The headteacher and the senior leaders are adept at using this information to target support for any pupils at risk of underachievement. The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well to provide extra teaching support, which is proving effective in closing the attainment gaps between these and other pupils.
- Leaders and governors have made effective use of procedures relating to staff performance to tackle previous weaknesses in teaching. Teachers' pay is linked directly to the achievement of pupils. Staff are very positive about the training and support provided, which helps them to improve the quality of their work.
- The school provides pupils with a broad and stimulating curriculum which supports pupils' good progress and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. A strong feature of the school is how well it promotes tolerance and respect throughout all the pupils' work. This is covered well through assemblies focusing on modern British values and other topics in spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The provision for literacy is well planned overall, but pupils' writing skills are not as consistently well developed as those in reading.
- The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity, making sure that pupils' individual learning needs are identified and met; there is no discrimination. The headteacher ensures that she meets with all new families to the school to ensure that they feel welcomed. Relationships at the school are warm and welcoming.
- Pupils' participation in sport is an improving feature of the curriculum. The primary sport funding has had a good impact by being used well to provide specialist physical education teachers from Sports Coaching Northwest. Working alongside professional coaches has strengthened teachers' practice and helped to further develop the health and well-being of pupils.
- Statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met through rigorous systems that are checked and updated regularly. All staff in school are well trained and have a secure understanding of their role in the protection of children. They are thorough in identifying any issues. These are very promptly followed up with staff and parents, and the actions taken are monitored closely. This contributes strongly to pupils being very safe and feeling safe.

- The local authority has given valuable support to the school, particularly in supporting it in its change of headteacher, forming the federation and developing provision for the early years.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching and pupils' performance data. They ask searching questions, receive regular reports from the senior leadership, and come into school to see for themselves. Individual governors are linked to subjects and areas of the school. Governors know that staff training has been effective in helping the school to raise standards and enabling pupils to make good progress.
- Governors ensure that finances are well managed. They check the impact of the pupil premium and primary school sports funding.
- Governors are aware of how the headteacher has improved teaching through rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation, and how she links salary progression closely to performance. Hence, governors have a good understanding of how any underperformance is dealt with and good teaching rewarded.
- Through attending regular training, governors are highly skilled in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements, so that pupils and staff are safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils speak confidently and proudly about the excellent behaviour in their school and understand that it is their responsibility to help maintain these high standards. They are courteous and considerate when speaking to adults, including visitors. Pupils show great sensitivity to other ways of life and enjoy arranging and participating in charity events in the village.
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to school and learning are evident in their work; never more so than when they are doing their daily 'Personal Improvement Time', which they call the PIT stop. This is a procedure that the school has put in place to help raise pupils' standards, when the pupils enter school before the beginning of the day and respond to the teachers' marking. They say that they enjoy their schoolwork because teachers make learning exciting.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Pupils arrive promptly, settle instantly to their registration tasks, listen intently in lessons, ask questions when they do not understand, and strive to fulfil their teachers' high expectations. Their excellent attitudes to learning enable them to make good progress.
- Around the school, and at break times and lunchtimes, pupils show similarly high standards of behaviour. They walk quietly and sensibly up and down stairs and along corridors. They eat sociably together in the hall or outside when allowed in good weather. There is no litter, graffiti or bad language because pupils take a pride in their school.
- Pupils, especially the older ones, enjoy taking responsibility. Parents often point to the family atmosphere in the school. Although there is no formal 'buddy' system in the school, many older pupils know that it is their responsibility to help younger ones. It is not unusual to see an older pupil go and play with a child in the playground who appears to be on his or her own.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school, and all parents that responded to the online questionnaire agreed that their children are safe and very well cared for.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber- and homophobic bullying. They are very clear that everyone is unique and deserves respect. Pupils who spoke with the inspector reported that there was no bullying at Betley, and school records confirm this.
- Pupils are very confident that they can take concerns to adults who they know will listen and not take sides. They are equally aware that staff might have to pass information on if they are unable to resolve

any issues themselves.

- Health and safety is always high on the school agenda and is taught explicitly through one of the personal, social and health education themes. The school's pastoral care is a significant strength.
- The school's breakfast club provides a safe start to the school day.
- Pupils told the inspector how they are very well informed about keeping safe when they go on residential trips to outdoor activity centres. These excellent opportunities have a significant impact in broadening pupils' horizons and ensure they learn about safety beyond their village community.
- One parent told the inspector that her children 'love the school because they know how well the teachers care for them'. This reflects the confidence families have in the staff and why the vast majority who responded to Parent View say they would recommend this school.
- Attendance is above national levels. This reflects how much the pupils enjoy being at school and the excellent way in which the school works with parents.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have secured improvement to teaching throughout the school, partly by addressing recognised areas of weaker teaching and partly through good professional support. Teaching consistently meets the individual learning needs of pupils from all backgrounds. Teachers establish very positive relationships with pupils and expect their behaviour to be exemplary. This improvement in teaching is the main reason for pupils' current good progress and the rapidly rising standards.
- The work in pupils' books and their rates of progress reflect the good teaching they receive across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, which they use effectively to provide a wide range of activities that promote pupils' literacy, reading and numeracy skills well.
- Effective teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes helps the children make good progress. A good range of activities in language and mathematics are used, and these develop children's skills well. Here and in the rest of the school, teachers make sure that learning is interesting.
- Reading is promoted strongly throughout the school and pupils of all ages read well. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has been reviewed and strengthened. As a result, pupils achieved above the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014.
- The teaching of mathematics is equally good. The new assessment procedures for both English and mathematics have ensured a consistency of approach from all staff to improving progress. This is improving the attainment of all pupils. Pupils are well supported by teaching that is now better matched to pupils' different abilities than was previously the case.
- Writing is taught well. Teachers have introduced new and more exciting ways to encourage pupils to practise their writing skills through topics that the pupils help to select. This is helping to improve pupils' writing, especially that of boys, and is also developing pupils' team-working, communication and problem-solving skills. However, pupils' attainment in writing skills is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers use questions effectively to make pupils think carefully. Teachers also mark work effectively during the lesson. This enables teachers to adjust tasks where these are too easy or hard for pupils. Consequently, pupils maintain a good focus on their work and learn well. Teachers treat pupils with respect and are interested in what they have to say. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and respond readily to tasks with interest and enthusiasm. A wide range of whole-class, group and paired activities are all used effectively to help to increase pupils' confidence and their speaking skills.
- Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to the learning of pupils of all abilities. They are

highly skilled and support the work of the teachers well. They make sure that activities in lessons are adapted so that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs understand what is expected of them and make good progress. In turn, this means that pupils are helped to overcome particular difficulties, such as in reading and spelling.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught well. The extra help they get in the classroom and at other times is effective because it focuses well on the individual learning needs of each pupil. Many of these pupils make better than the expected progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers mark pupils' work on a daily basis and use this information to help them improve. Pupils use the 'PIT stop' time at the beginning of each day to respond thoughtfully to their teachers' comments. This helps them to improve their work. At the same time, teachers are available to support those who are still unsure.
- Teaching focuses carefully on the most-able pupils in each year group, challenging them through probing questioning and work that makes them think deeply. However, on rare occasions, the most-able pupils are not challenged enough to ensure that they make the rapid progress of which they are capable. In such cases, pupils find tasks too easy or too difficult.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make good progress throughout the early years, in their reading, writing, number and shape and space work. In 2014, children made good progress so that a higher proportion than nationally achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Over the last few years, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has fluctuated between broadly in line with and above national averages. The school's own data, observations of pupils' learning in lessons and the good-quality work in their books indicates that boys and girls from all backgrounds are now making more consistently good progress. Attainment is rising to become securely above average by the time they leave the school.
- Current pupils' progress and attainment are accelerating sharply in reading, including phonics, writing, number and shape and space. The data and the work seen in books and lessons show that the present Year 2 pupils are expected to attain above national average standards.
- In 2014, attainment at the end of Year 6 was broadly in line with national averages. The school's current data shows large improvements, compared with historic data from 2012. This improving trend is consistent across the school. Progress has accelerated in Key Stage 2 so that a growing proportion of pupils, including the most able, are working at levels that are above those expected for their age. This is due to the good teaching and the good support given to pupils.
- The school's accurate records were confirmed by inspecting pupils' work, observing them learn in lessons and speaking to pupils. They indicate that all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well during their time at this school. This evidence also shows that standards are rising.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are working at levels that are much higher than those expected for their age in reading, mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Their extended writing, although above the levels expected for their age, is not as strong. There is a similar picture in Year 5.
- Achievement in writing is now good. Many pupils make impressive progress and most make good progress in writing throughout the school.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics and reading. Previous difference between the performance of girls and boys, especially in mathematics and writing, has been reduced.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have a positive approach to learning and

make good progress overall. The support they receive is strategically directed and helps them to achieve well, with some making better than expected progress. This success is due to the good systems, which enable teachers to identify much earlier pupils' specific learning needs. Strong links with external agencies also support both academic and personal needs of individual pupils.

- There were too few pupils eligible for pupil premium funding in Year in 2014 to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual pupils. However, a study of the school's test results, assessment data and the pupils' work confirms that disadvantaged pupils across the school are making good progress from their starting points. Pupil premium funding is having a positive effect on the achievement of these pupils.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. Last year, the progress of the most-able pupils was not as fast as it should have been. A much higher proportion of the most-able pupils in the current Year 6 class are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, there are a large number of pupils working at the higher levels in English and mathematics.

The early years provision is good

- In the past, children have joined the Nursery with skills and knowledge that are generally below those typical for their age, especially in the areas of language, number and social and emotional development. They make good progress and children start in the Reception class with knowledge and skills raised but still below those typical for that age. In Reception this year, children's skills and knowledge on entry were higher than previously. In 2014, the children achieved a good level of development and were well prepared for work in Key Stage 1.
- In lessons, staff have high expectations and make sure that learning is purposeful and well focused. They provide opportunities for children to play and explore, and make sure that children are suitably challenged. As a result, children learn quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning. This includes disadvantaged pupils as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Good use is made of the indoor and outdoor environment. However, the outdoor provision for the early years is limited in size and places some constraints on children's physical development, especially with large-wheeled toys and bicycles.
- Staff assess and record children's progress regularly and accurately using the 'learning journeys', which record children's work and progress, and which are regularly shared with parents. They use this information to plan activities to extend and challenge the children further.
- Children are well motivated and show very good attitudes to learning in a safe and caring environment. The early years provision makes a strong contribution to children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are close links with parents. These ensure that children make a smooth transition from Nursery to the Reception Year, and on to Key Stage 1.
- The early years leader was appointed in Jan 2014. In that time, she has created a team who are united in their commitment to ensuring that the children are not only happy and safe, but also do as well as they can. She is well supported by the local authority and the partnership school in developing clear plans for the future development of the provision, including the outdoor facility. These plans are based on an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development, particularly in relation to the outdoors environment. However, the plans for developing the outdoor area have not yet been implemented.

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	124235
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	461823

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Cartlidge
Headteacher	Samantha Ray (Executive Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2011
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