

St Leonard's Primary School

St Leonard's Avenue, Stafford, ST17 4LT

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 and managers have not taken swift enough action to reverse a decline in pupils' progress in Key Stage 2. Middle leaders have not yet developed sufficient plans to support rapid improvement in core subjects. Systems are not yet in place to enable pupils' progress information to be used fully to plan appropriate levels of support for pupils.
- The quality of teaching is improving, but is still inconsistent across the school. Overall, teaching requires improvement.
- Teaching does not always meet the needs of all learners. As a result, progress in some lessons is not as good as it could be.
- Teachers do not give pupils clear enough guidance on how to improve their work. The school is currently working with an external consultant to improve marking and feedback to pupils.
- Pupils' progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics has been significantly below the national average for two years. Leaders have only recently taken action to address this. As a result, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Governors do not have all the information they need to hold the school fully to account for pupils' progress and achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement show that the school now has the capacity to secure further improvement.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Well-organised routines provide varied and interesting learning opportunities so the children settle quickly, listen well and are keen to learn.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the higher National Curriculum levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above the national average.
- Pupils work together well. They enthusiastically share ideas when learning and support each other both in lessons and at playtimes.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They behave well, are nearly always engaged in their learning and say they feel cared for at school.
- The school makes good use of the local community to provide a range of learning opportunities that develop pupils' awareness and interest.
- The vast majority of parents are supportive of the school. They value their children's educational experiences at the school and the work of the staff.
- Effective work with a range of external organisations supports the curriculum and pupils' understanding of how to stay safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 18 lessons or part lessons, including examples of teaching in every year group. Two of these lesson observations were carried out jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority who works closely with the school.
- The inspector, together with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, looked at a range of pupils' books to establish the progress and quality of their work over time.
- Informal discussions were held with parents to gauge their views of the school. The inspection team took account of a letter from a parent, 40 recent responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed 19 responses from the staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors talked with a group of pupils as well as individual pupils during their lessons and at playtimes to find out their views about the school.
- The inspection team heard pupils read and observed their behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- A wide range of documents were looked at by the inspectors, including the school's plans for improvement, external monitoring reports, staff development, and information on pupils' attainment and their progress. Inspectors also saw records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Stuart Bellworthy, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St. Leonard's Primary School is smaller than most primary schools.
- The current headteacher is retiring at the end of this school year. The deputy headteacher has been appointed as the new headteacher from September 2015. There have been a number of other recent staffing changes.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is below that of other schools nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time and those in the Nursery class attend part time. These two classes make up the early years foundation stage part of the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring:
 - all improvement plans and targets set for teachers are sharper
 - systems to monitor regularly the progress of all pupils are effective. This information then needs to be used to put in place rapid and timely interventions, particularly aimed at supporting pupils who are falling behind
 - middle leaders are held to account and provided with further training to develop more effective action plans to support pupils' progress and achievement
 - governors have all the information they need fully to support, challenge and hold the school to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better and pupils' achievement improves rapidly, by ensuring that all teachers:
 - further improve the teaching of reading, writing, mathematics, spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - consistently deliver lessons that meet the needs of all pupils and additional adult support is always used effectively to support and challenge pupils
 - give precise feedback to pupils, so that they can use this to improve their work
 - check pupils act on the advice that teachers give them.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have recently taken positive steps to improve the quality of teaching. New teaching appointments, particularly in Key Stage 2, are helping to improve pupils' progress. There is now a renewed ethos to support improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. The school is working closely with external consultants to develop feedback to pupils and the teaching of reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, some of these steps were not taken early enough and therefore there has not been sufficient time to measure the full impact of these improvements on pupils' achievement.
- The deputy headteacher has been appointed as the new headteacher from September 2015, as the current headteacher is retiring. An acting deputy headteacher has been internally appointed, along with a number of recent staffing changes. As a result of these changes, there has been a lack of staffing stability, leading to disruption for some pupils. However, the recent appointments are strong and the planned staffing structure from September 2015 is a positive one. This means the school is now building capacity for more sustained improvement.
- Middle leaders need further training and support to fully develop their roles and be held accountable for their responsibilities. Leaders regularly check teaching, pupils' assessments and teachers' feedback to pupils. However, these checks are not clearly linked to teachers' performance targets. Targets set for teachers need to be sharper to support the improvement of teaching.
- Better leadership and more stable staffing in the early years and Key Stage 1 have led to stronger teaching and pupils' achievement. As a result, standards at the end of Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 are consistently above the national average.
- The local authority support of the school is good. A local authority advisor has arranged for external consultants to support the school's improvements in the quality of teaching. This has led to improvements in the early years and the teaching of reading, grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding well to ensure that pupils eligible for support make good progress. For example, additional teachers and teaching assistants have been employed to support specific programmes in mathematics, reading, and writing. As a result, the extra help has enabled the gap between eligible pupils and other pupils in the school to reduce by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6.
- The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Essential staff training is kept up to date so that everyone knows what to do if they have concerns about a pupil. When concerns are identified, the school ensures other agencies provide the support needed for pupils and families.
- The school's newly implemented curriculum provides a good range of learning experiences. English and mathematics are supplemented by a topic approach in all other subjects. Pupils in Year 4, for example, enjoyed being involved in a local Staffordshire Hoard history project, where they took part in a real archaeological dig and then created their own clay work in school. Consequently, pupils have a good range of opportunities to develop their interests and skills in different curriculum areas, especially art, history and the environment.
- Assemblies provide good opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness, celebrate their personal achievements and tackle discrimination. Pupils learn about democracy and equality of opportunity through the election of the school council. The 'Playground Buddies' have to write a playground charter as part of their application to take on the role. These opportunities have helped to develop pupils' understanding and respect for others and supported their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- The primary sports funding is used well to increase pupils' participation in competitive activities and physical education. Additional netball and gymnastics equipment has been purchased. Specialist coaches have worked alongside staff to deliver tennis and gymnastics sessions for pupils. This has improved staff

confidence and pupils say they enjoy the wider range of sports sessions and clubs they can now access.

- The school works closely with parents, providing workshops to help them understand how their children learn in school and how they can support their children's learning. The school's own survey and the online questionnaire (Parent View) results show that the large majority of parents are supportive of the school. Parents told inspectors that communication with school is good, especially for those with children who have additional needs or need individual support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, along with what needs to improve. However, they do not have all the information they need fully to hold the school to account to ensure that leaders are tackling gaps in pupils' progress. Governors are now aware of the importance to check that all areas of the school are being developed, rather than focusing on one subject.
 - Governors are aware of pupils' attainment data but they rely on leaders to provide this and do not seek this information for themselves. Governors do not always have access to regular updates on pupils' progress during the year.
 - Pay decisions are now linked to staff performance. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. They have been fully involved in recent appointments and the staffing structure planned for September 2015.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about how additional funding such as the pupil premium and the sport premium grant is being spent and check that it is making a positive difference to pupils' achievement.
 - Governors manage the school's budget well. Due to a decreasing income, leaders and governors have taken appropriate steps to ensure the budget will be balanced by the end of the current financial year.
 - Governors contribute to ensuring safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
 - Governors are informed about how the school works with the local community and how this aspect can be further developed. Governors also know that the school is in the process of developing the curriculum. However, governors need further training and understanding to support the school in developing the curriculum fully to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct in lessons is good and they have positive attitudes towards each other. Pupils show good respect for both adults and each other.
- Staff promote good behaviour and manage pupils' needs well. Consequently, lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. The large majority of staff and the parents are positive about the management of behaviour in the school.
- Pupils are well informed about most types of bullying. They recognise that behaviour is getting better and are confident that they can go and speak to adults if there is a problem. Pupils say that adults nearly always quickly resolve any problems they have on the playground.
- Pupils say that learning is fun at school and they know what the school is trying to improve. They enjoy lessons and respond well to adults' questions and prompts. Pupils move sensibly between activities in lessons and work thoughtfully during group work, carefully considering each other's views and ideas.
- School leaders record behaviour incidents carefully. Staff work closely with both parents and outside agencies to support pupils' emotional, social and behavioural needs. Although a very small number of pupils display challenging behaviour, effective and appropriate measures are in place to manage this.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safe practices are emphasised and embedded in all aspects of the school's work. School trips and visitors such as the police support pupils' understanding of safety and caring for others. Pupils unanimously say they feel safe, because adults are there to look after them and always take safety kits on trips.

- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. They are knowledgeable about the dangers associated with the internet and can give examples about what to do to keep safe online.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. The management of safeguarding is effectively organised and all staff are appropriately and regularly trained. Key staff provide effective communication with parents and work closely with outside agencies to safeguard individual pupils.
- The school is aiming to achieve high attendance and any absences are quickly followed up. Pupils' attendance rates are in line with the national average for all groups and improving. Pupils are keen to come to school because they say learning is fun and they feel safe.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time is too variable across the school. Although pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average, the progress pupils made from Year 2 to Year 6 has been well-below the national average for the last two years.
- Teaching in the early years and Key Stage 1 is stronger and consequently these pupils develop secure skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Recent appointments have started to improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 and there is a greater focus on the teaching of reading across the school. However, it is too early to see the full impact of these improvements.
- Targets set for teachers are not sufficiently sharp enough to hold teachers to account for the progress of pupils in their class. Middle leaders are not fully supported or held to account for their responsibilities in developing pupils' achievement in English and mathematics, and for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The school has recently started working with an external consultant to improve teachers' marking and feedback to pupils. School leaders know that this work is not yet complete but have appropriate plans further to develop this aspect soon, to help pupils improve their work.
- In weaker lessons, not all pupils make sufficient progress. Teaching does not consistently meet the learning needs of all pupils or challenge pupils enough to develop their knowledge. As a result, some pupils' misunderstandings are sometimes left unchecked and their progress is not as good as it could be.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers set well-planned activities for all groups and make good use of additional adult support. For example, in a writing lesson seen, all pupils were clear about what they were learning and very engaged in writing instructions. The teacher used her time very well to provide intensive support to a less-able group, while carefully making sure that the whole class were progressing. The teaching assistant used her good subject knowledge to provide effective support to a small group. As a result, all pupils remained focused throughout the lesson and made good progress.
- Overall, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress in line with other pupils in the school. The school is appropriately reviewing how these pupils are supported and the most effective way to use teaching assistants. Teaching assistants were seen providing effective support to these pupils and those who qualify for pupil premium funding.
- The teaching of reading now has greater importance and is improving. Reading is now timetabled every morning for all classes. Parents have been encouraged to use the school library with their children and the school has successfully fostered a love of reading. Pupils across the school were seen reading, enjoying and sharing a good range of books. As a result of improved teaching and appropriate support, Year 2 pupils who did not pass the Year 1 phonics (the sounds that letters make) check are now use their phonic skills well, read confidently and are catching up securely.
- The school appropriately focused on improving the teaching of writing two years ago. Detailed planning is effectively amended to help pupils progress. In a cross-curricular lesson, Key Stage 1 pupils were writing a riddle about a creature. The teacher used her subject knowledge well to direct learning and other adults

supported groups and individuals effectively. Pupils learnt to vary the vocabulary and use time connectives well, as a result of effective teaching and modelling.

- The teaching of mathematics is improving, although there has been less focus on this subject recently. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils were highly engaged and worked frantically in groups to solve problems within the time given. The teacher ensured the class remained focused using questioning and intervening where necessary to check pupils were on track. Teaching assistants quickly engaged the pupils they were working with and encouraged them to explain their reasoning. Consequently, pupils enjoyed the lesson and made good progress.
- The school promotes good relationships, including respect for each other and different faiths. The school's positive ethos and links within the local community enable pupils to develop an understanding of the value of belonging to a community. All pupils are known well by all members of staff and feel well cared for as a result.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achieve well in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and their attainment is consistently above the national average. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is weaker, but improving. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, their attainment is broadly in line with the national average. The school's own assessment information suggests that Year 6 attainment in all areas of English and mathematics will be at least in line with the national average in 2015.
- As a result of improving teaching, achievement in writing is improving well. At the end of Year 2, the standard of pupils' writing is good and above the national average. The standard of writing achieved by the end of Year 6 in 2014 was in line with the national average.
- Achievement in mathematics is stronger. Pupils develop their number skills well and achieve above the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, as a result of better teaching and well-directed support.
- Achievement in reading is improving, but still requires improvement. In the Year 1 phonics check, nearly all pupils score above the national average. Most of the Year 1 pupils who did not reach the expected level are catching up securely in Year 2 because early reading skills are taught well. For example, weaker readers, when reading aloud, successfully sound out unfamiliar words using their improved knowledge of phonics. Nearly all Year 2 pupils are able to read accurately and achieve above the national average. However, pupils do not make enough progress in Key Stage 2 and therefore standards are below the national average by the end of Year 6.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2014 was above the national average. However, there are occasions when this group of pupils could be given more challenging work to help them progress even further.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs varies a little across the school and their needs are mostly met. The majority of these pupils are progressing in line with other pupils, as a result of skilled support. Leaders rightly recognise that there are still some pupils with special educational needs that should be making better progress and that this is an area of the school which needs to be reviewed.
- The achievement of pupils eligible for additional funding at the school is carefully monitored. The additional support given to pupils has enabled the school to reduce the attainment gap between those pupils that do and do not receive the additional funding and to enable disadvantaged pupils to make good progress from their starting points. The attainment gap at the end of Year 2 is quite big, especially in reading. However, this gap reduces in Key Stage 2, as a result of well-tailored programmes of support and effective help in lessons. Eligible pupils still remain on average one-and-a-half terms behind other pupils in English and mathematics, both within the school and nationally, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.

The early years provision**is good**

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. The Nursery and Reception leader is experienced and has high expectations of all children. Staff are well trained and successful in providing a stimulating learning environment that captures children's imagination from the moment they arrive at school.
- In the early years classrooms, children enter the school with skills that are generally typical for their age, but less than typical for some. High quality leadership, effective organisation and good teaching enable children to make good progress, so that nearly all children are well prepared for Year 1 at the end of Reception. There were no Nursery or Reception children eligible for pupil premium funding in 2014.
- Children in the Nursery classroom progress well. Skilled adults and a highly stimulating learning environment enable children to remain engaged in a variety of activities. Children practise letters, shape and number skills in games and engage in a high standard of adult-led learning conversations. Children wearing safety helmets and high visibility jackets during construction activities understand why walls need to be built straight and the need for safety equipment.
- Children begin the school day confidently and happily because of the well-established routines that are reinforced by all adults working in both the Nursery and Reception classrooms. Adults ensure children learn in a safe and caring environment and regularly check the provision and equipment to make sure it is safe to use.
- Early years staff are skilled at working with young children and set clear learning expectations that the children understand. Consequently, children listen well, are enthusiastic to learn and behave well. They develop a good sense of how to keep themselves and others safe and are keen to join in the good range of learning activities.
- Teaching is good. A wide range of carefully planned and well-resourced learning activities ensure that children have daily opportunities to learn and achieve well. For example, teachers focus well on small groups to develop key skills such as writing about traditional stories. Teaching assistants and parent helpers support groups well, making houses for the 'Three Little Pigs', creating a woodland scenery, sharing books and using repeating patterns to develop mathematics skills. Consequently, children are highly engaged in both the Nursery and Reception classrooms and make good progress.
- The support for the few disabled children and those with special educational needs is effective. These children are nurtured well and they make progress in line with others. Adults ensure that most children are provided with just the right amount of challenge to make good progress. The most-able children are given activities that challenge them to achieve well.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were all very positive and appreciative of the good start their children were making to school. They confirmed they are kept regularly informed of their children's learning and progress through informal discussion with teachers and adult workshops.

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	124199
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	461807

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	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Byrne
Headteacher	Susan Alebon
Date of previous school inspection	07-Nov-11
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