

Hutchinson Memorial CofE (A) First School

Uttoxeter Road, Checkley, Stoke-on-Trent ST10 4NB

Inspection dates 12–13 July 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Excellent leadership at this school brings out the best in everyone.
- The headteacher sets high standards for herself and others. She provides calm, well-informed and purposeful direction and energy that has steered this school upwards to many significant successes.
- Academic standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high in all year groups. Year on year, pupils make excellent progress in each class.
- Regardless of background or ability, all pupils do very well and get the chance to shine. Disadvantaged pupils often do better than other pupils nationally. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities get highly effective support and the most able pupils soar to some remarkable heights in their learning.
- The standard of pupils' written work in several different subjects is excellent.
- The quality of teaching in all subjects is consistently strong. It meets pupils' learning needs with ambitious precision.
- Whether they begin in the Nursery or Reception Year, children get off to a great start in the early years class. They make rapid gains in all areas of learning and are exceptionally well prepared for learning in the years ahead.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite to one another, respectful to adults and show keen interest in their lessons.
- Attendance at school is above average and lateness is rare. Pupils arrive at school looking smart and are ready to learn.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and happy at school. This shows in their confident, mature demeanour and supportive attitudes towards others.
- The governors have a detailed understanding of the school's performance and are always looking for ways to build further on the school's many achievements. Consequently, the school has gone from strength to strength.
- Parents are very supportive of the school's work. All of the parents who responded to Parent View would recommend this school to other families. Several parents described the school as 'fantastic'. Inspection evidence supports this view.
- School leaders and staff are superb role models for the youngsters at this school. They help pupils to understand the value of hard work and perseverance. They also demonstrate the importance of honesty, integrity and concern for others.
- Pupils are equipped with positive attitudes and values that help them to make the most of the many opportunities the school provides. When they leave at the end of Year 4, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next step in their education. The foundations laid at this school will support them very well in their future lives.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to work closely with other schools, and especially those with plans to join the soon-to-be-created local multi-academy trust, in order to:
 - learn from the most effective practice in other schools
 - share the excellent practice at this school
 - widen opportunities for the professional development of staff.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, the school has gone from strength to strength. Its many successes have been the result of strong teamwork, staff commitment, supportive parents and highly effective teaching. However, the key driver behind all of this is the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher. She sets very high standards and puts great store by the virtues of hard work, trust, optimism and integrity. Her leadership has created a climate where excellent behaviour and conscientious attitudes are the expected norms. Pupils and staff know that they need to aim high and do their very best, and they do. Academic standards are well above average and all pupils experience success.
- The headteacher is also able to spot leadership potential in others and develop it. Consequently, leadership responsibilities have been shared out wisely. The leadership of key areas such as special educational needs and early years is delegated to a team of two middle leaders who both do a first-rate job. They keep up to date with current practice and thinking, maintain detailed records and have an excellent understanding of the impact of their work on staff training and pupils' achievement. They also know exactly what they need to do next in order to drive standards even higher.
- This is a small school, but there is a lot going on and all of it is worthwhile. Subjects are organised and taught with imagination and flair. School leaders have chosen to link different subjects together into termly themes that appeal to pupils' interests and experiences. One of this term's themes, for example, is called 'Shrek' and brings together subjects such as English, history, technology and science. The breadth, quality of experience and the work generated by these and other termly themes are top-class. Pupils can explain how skills learned in one subject help them in another. They also understand that working hard now will help them in the future.
- Pupil premium funding and the primary school sport grant are used to excellent effect. Year after year, the achievements of disadvantaged pupils have matched those of others, and the range and quality of sport and physical education (PE) teaching have improved considerably. The number of pupils taking part in after-school activities has increased and pupils have experienced success at local competitive events, including a recent gymnastics competition. A whole-school dance, which was being practised during the inspection, gave all the chance to take part in a worthwhile collective event that epitomised the importance of teamwork, focus and enjoyment.
- In other collective activities such as assembly, and through class discussion and the day-to-day interactions between staff and pupils, staff give out many worthy messages that help pupils to realise, in thought and action, the very decent values that the school promotes.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has strengthened in recent times and is very effective. New governors with specific skills have been recruited and governors have changed their committee structures and ways of working in order to sharpen their focus on key aspects of the school's work.
 - Governors have an excellent understanding of assessment data and make focused visits to the school to evaluate aspects of provision alongside school leaders. Consequently, when putting together the school development plan or reviewing teaching and learning policies, governors are able to bring an informed eye to all the matters in hand. They know that academic standards are high and expect no less. However, they are equally concerned about pupils' safety, welfare and personal development; they make sure that these aspects stay high on their agenda.
 - In preparing the way for the school to join a local multi-academy trust, governors have demonstrated a forward-thinking approach. They have been active in seeking out and supporting a model that suits the needs of their school.
 - Governors aim to establish joint working arrangements that encourage the most effective practice to be shared and widen opportunities for pupils and staff.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All adults are alert to their duty of care and are attentive to every child. Communication within school and between the school, other organisations and home is efficient and any welfare concerns are attended to promptly. Whenever a member of staff has had cause to act on a concern, they have done so swiftly and with due regard for all the proper processes. The school site is kept secure and supervision arrangements operate with friendly efficiency. All the proper checks on staff and visitors are carried out correctly and records are stored securely. School administration is very well organised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Not a moment is lost in lessons. As soon as pupils arrive in the morning, they settle quickly and get on with their work. The high standards set by their teachers are reflected in the high standards pupils set for themselves. They do their best, want to do well and take pride in their achievements. Consequently, they achieve highly in many different subjects.
- In all four classes, teaching is extremely effective. Excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants and careful attention to pupils' varied learning needs results in lessons that zip along at a purposeful pace. Pupils get a lot of high-quality work done and learn much. Pupils and teachers are very attentive to one another and this shows in the trust, calm behaviour and enjoyment of learning that is evident throughout the school.
- During this inspection, for example, pupils in key stage 1 were finding out and writing about life in Mexico. This research project required them to discuss, listen, ask questions and use a variety of reference materials. Pupils managed all of this with keen efficiency and mature thoughtfulness. Teaching not only inspired them to produce excellent pieces of writing but also equipped them with the confidence to ask questions, offer suggestions to adults and even to come up with ways they could improve the lesson further.
- The standard of work in pupils' school books is excellent. In the early years right through to Year 4, pupils' handwriting and presentation is often faultless and the content of their writing is remarkably well organised and interesting to read. Teachers are quick to praise but also make it clear that they will not accept anything less than pupils' best efforts. To this end, they steer pupils with constructive guidance that builds resilience and self-confidence. In turn, pupils of all ages are able to stick at tasks and will amend and refine work until they are satisfied with it.
- Teachers regularly organise themed events, such as a sports or arts week, when specialist teachers come into school to provide expert input or to inject something different. During the inspection, a sports week was taking place, funded by the primary sport grant. The specialist teaching gave pupils a worthwhile taste of new activities and taught them some new skills. More than this, it also served to inspire them in other ways because the teacher drew attention to the importance of making the most of their talents and opportunities. As pupils excitedly handled some Commonwealth Games medals, they were reminded of the link between dedication, commitment and success. These key messages, which are often woven into lessons and other aspects of school life, are clearly helping pupils to realise what they can achieve when they put their mind to it.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school's values, which include trust, honesty, respect and curiosity, are promoted at every opportunity. Staff are excellent role models and pupils learn to have high expectations of themselves and are supportive, friendly and helpful to others. They are keen to learn and are able to exercise initiative and take responsibility, both in lessons and at playtimes. Consequently, the school day runs smoothly, all get on well and pupils of all ages feel very safe and secure at school.
- Pupils understand the school rules and have a voice in shaping them. Poor behaviour is very rare and no one can recall any instances of bullying. Nevertheless, school staff make sure that pupils are equipped with the life skills they need. Pupils learn about what to do if they encounter unkind behaviour. Visiting speakers and theatre groups come into school to teach pupils about how to stay safe in situations they may come across now and in the future. In response, pupils demonstrate an ability to resolve any problems that do occur. On the playground, for example, pupils are quick to help others who fall down or to find ways to diffuse arguments or upsets that occur from time to time. They are confident that, in most cases, they can sort things out by themselves, but are equally confident that an adult will help them, if needs be.
- Pupils at Hutchinson Memorial CofE First School are reflective, courteous, caring and kind. They know the difference between right and wrong, are polite to adults and enjoy one another's company.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils attend regularly and arrive on time, looking smart and are ready to make the most of the day

ahead. In all school situations they behave well. In fact, their conduct in most situations is exemplary. This excellent behaviour does not go unnoticed and there are many rewards in class, at lunchtimes and on the playground that recognise pupils' positive attitudes and contribution to the school. Pupils value these and, during this inspection, pupils proudly described the stickers, cups, certificates and other rewards they had earned. One of the school's stated aims is to praise and acknowledge effort and success. This inspection certainly found that all staff take time to praise pupils whenever they deserve it.

- Older pupils take on jobs around the school, such as playground leaders or cloakroom monitors. The playground leaders take their roles very seriously and do a great job. They regularly set up games for others to play and make sure that no one who wants to join in is left out. In conversation with the cloakroom monitors, they reported to the inspector that one of their jobs is to check that coats and bags are stored neatly. However, one pupil then pointed out that, 'there isn't usually much for us to do because everyone here is pretty tidy'. Indeed, the school site is kept very smart and all the classrooms are well organised, clean and tidy.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- Pupils of all abilities do exceptionally well at this school. Whatever their starting points when they first arrive in the early years, pupils go on to make excellent progress in every class. Academic standards are high in every year group.
- Over time, pupils have reached well-above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the end of key stage 1 assessments. Pupils have then gone on to reach even greater heights in Years 3 and 4. This year, assessment arrangements have changed, so it is difficult to compare this year's assessments with those of previous years. Nevertheless, it is clear that standards remain high. Currently, over half of the pupils in Year 2 are working at above age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. In Years 3 and 4, around three quarters of current pupils are working at above-average standards. In all year groups, current pupils' progress is excellent.
- The most able pupils reach very high standards. They bring a maturity and capability to their work that result in some superb achievements. Their written work, in particular, demonstrates a remarkably impressive command of language, grammar and punctuation and is presented with accomplished care. Much of the written work in pupils' English books and in other subjects, such as history or science, is of an exceptional quality.
- Disadvantaged pupils succeed in line with other pupils at the school. In fact, more often than not, the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils at Hutchinson Memorial CofE First School are higher than those reached by other pupils nationally. This has been the case for several years now and remains the case for current pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from excellent support and they, too, experience success. The inspector's scrutiny of school records revealed that the proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register has decreased over time. This is not because of any change in intake but because teaching in all classes has got much better at meeting a wide range of needs. All teachers are trained to spot the signs of dyslexia. They modify their teaching as soon as it is apparent that a pupil is struggling to cope with an aspect of learning. In addition, the quality of extra support provided to pupils means that, in many cases, they catch up and achieve in line with their peers. The inspector's case-by-case study of pupils currently on the special educational needs register found that pupils were making significant gains in response to the support provided.
- The proportions of Year 1 pupils reaching the expected standard in the annual phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) screening check have been above the national figures for the last three years running. This year's result shows that, again, the vast majority reached or exceeded the expected standard. This is a direct result of the outstanding phonics teaching at the school and the school's work to promote an interest in reading and books.

Early years provision is outstanding

- The youngest children get a fantastic start to school. Whether they start in the Nursery or Reception Year, they settle in quickly and immediately start to make great progress. The quality of teaching and the level of care provided cannot be faulted. Staff are warm, welcoming, capable and highly effective at their

jobs. Consequently, children enjoy school, feel safe and love learning. The learning habits and excellent behaviours that take root in the early years serve the children very well in the later years.

- The majority of children start school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. Some are more advanced than this, some less so. However, whatever their starting points, they all do exceptionally well. Year on year, the proportions of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year have been above the national figures. In 2016, 94% reached a good level of development, which is a long way above last year's national figure.
- What is particularly striking about teaching in the early years is the attention to early literacy. The school's approach to letter recognition, formation and early writing is phenomenally successful. Children acquire skills very quickly. Their understanding of the written word and the quality of their early writing is remarkable. As soon as they start school, children come to see themselves as readers and writers and are soon producing fine pieces of work. There is no doubt that this is due to some brilliant teaching and the extremely positive and encouraging attitudes that beam out from all the adults at school.
- The spoken word, too, is alive and thriving in the early years. Whether inside or out, there is a contented hum of productive chatter as the busy learning environment feeds children's curiosity and imagination. Simple devices such as a 'school fun' box, which contains photographs of past events in school, prompts children's memories and fuels meaningful conversation.
- Communication between home and school works very well. Parents spoken to by the inspector said that they felt very well informed about school matters and responses on Parent View expressed a similar view. Parents are made to feel welcome in school and regularly share their observations about their children's achievements at home by sticking messages on the classroom's 'Tremendous Tree' display. These, together with the many assessments made by school staff, feed into detailed records of children's first year or years at school. These observations and records help teachers to plan exciting lessons that meet children's early learning needs with precision.
- Leadership of the early years is excellent. This is why teaching is so successful and achievement so high.

School details

Unique reference number	124333
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10003507

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	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–09
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Victoria Bennett
Headteacher	Mrs Paula Snee
Telephone number	01538 722385
Website	www.hutchinson.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@hutchinson.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 February 2011

Information about this school

- Hutchinson Memorial CofE (A) First School is smaller in size than the average primary school. Pupils are taught in four classes: one early years class, two key stage 1 classes and one key stage 2 class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is below the national average. The term 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school offers morning early years provision for nursery-age children and full-time early years provision for reception-age children. Both groups of children are taught in one early years class.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school has plans to join a local multi-academy trust in 2017.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some of these observations were carried out alongside the headteacher. The inspector also watched an assembly, examined pupils' work in books and on display, and considered school test and assessment information.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour, and the school's procedures, at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunch and breaktimes, and when pupils were moving about the school site and practising for sports day.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, senior and middle leaders, three governors and a representative of the local authority.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 25 recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) and 17 written comments. The inspector noted these and also spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. He also took account of responses to the school's own survey of parents' and pupils' views.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included information about pupils' achievement and evaluations of the school's performance. Records relating to governance, staff performance management, the quality of teaching, behaviour, attendance, safety and safeguarding were scrutinised. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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