

Jerome Primary School

Hussey Road, Norton Canes, Cannock, Staffordshire WS11 9TP

Inspection dates

18–19 January 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. She has established an ethos that places pupils' well-being and academic success at the centre of the school's work. As a result, pupils thrive and make good progress.
- School leaders have established robust systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's work and to ensure that teaching accurately matches the needs of the pupils. While the outcomes of leaders' monitoring are used to identify how the school can improve further, school improvement plans are not yet fully focused on the most pressing priorities.
- Governors provide challenge and support to school leaders. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths. They are also realistic in recognising that further improvements can be made to ensure that all pupils achieve the outcomes that they are capable of.
- Improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics mean that pupils in school are now making good progress in these subjects. The teaching of early reading is particularly effective. However, too few of the most able pupils in school achieve the highest standards in these subjects, particularly in mathematics. This is because teachers do not consistently set challenging tasks that demand these pupils to think deeply.
- Pupils are well behaved and value their opportunities to be involved in the ongoing development of the school. While they show care and consideration for others, pupils' understanding of different faiths and beliefs is not as well developed.
- Children make a good start in the early years provision. They settle quickly and develop positive attitudes to learning. While teachers and other adults ensure that activities are well planned to promote learning, opportunities to extend children's spoken language through the use of appropriate questions are often missed.
- School leaders place a high emphasis on pupils' safety and their physical development. All staff understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. The teaching of sports and physical activities is a strength of the school.
- The school curriculum has been developed well by leaders and teachers to make learning exciting and relevant across all subjects. Opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in other subjects have improved since the last inspection. However, opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge in other subjects are not as well established.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes by:
 - ensuring that teachers set suitably challenging tasks for the most able pupils, especially in mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in other subjects
 - ensuring that questioning is used effectively by teachers to challenge pupils to think deeply and to extend their spoken language, especially in the early years.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that plans for improvement focus sharply on the most important priorities for the school
 - further developing opportunities to extend pupils' understanding of different faiths, beliefs and cultures.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has, since her appointment, taken clear and decisive action to further strengthen and improve teaching in school. She has ensured that all members of the school community understand and are committed to achieving the school's motto of 'Forever forward'. This is linked securely to the aim of ensuring that pupils feel safe and reach their full potential in all areas of school life. One parent's comment encapsulated that of others: 'The ethos of the school is extremely positive. The children are taught to respect others and I have never encountered any ill feeling amongst children or teachers. There is a strong sense of community and everyone feels included.'
- The headteacher has established a set of non-negotiable teaching principles that are now adhered to by all teachers and other adults working with the pupils. These principles help to ensure that the quality of teaching is at least good in all classes.
- Leaders are involved in a wide range of regular and effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching. The outcomes from monitoring are used to set targets for improvement for teachers that are specific to each individual. Half-termly meetings on pupils' performance are held with each teacher to monitor the progress that pupils are making. Strong systems for the management of teachers' performance are used to hold them to account for the outcomes of the pupils in their classes.
- All teachers in this school are leaders with responsibility for improving teaching in their subject area. The headteacher and the two assistant headteachers work effectively alongside other staff to help them develop key skills in identifying how they can bring about improvements within their area of responsibility. Leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been effective in bringing about improvements in outcomes for these pupils.
- Leaders have established detailed improvement plans for the work of the school. The plans identify how the impact of actions taken can be measured and evaluated. However, they are too wide-ranging and there is consequently a lack of focus on the most important priorities for the school. Leaders are aware of what these priorities are but have not focused sufficiently in their improvement planning on how they can be achieved.
- The headteacher has put in place a thorough and well-thought-out assessment system. Teachers now use assessment accurately and use the outcomes of their assessments to track the progress of all pupils. Leaders carry out detailed analysis of the assessment information to ensure that all groups of pupils make at least good progress.
- Partnership working with other schools, both locally and in other parts of the country, is used well to allow staff to observe and learn from good practice. Teachers check the accuracy of their assessment judgements alongside teachers from other schools to ensure that they are correct.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. An assistant headteacher leads this aspect of the school's work well and ensures that the additional support that is put in place is effective and matched accurately to

the needs of all the disadvantaged pupils in school, including those who are the most able.

- The curriculum has been well planned to enthuse and excite pupils in their learning. A broad range of topics are now in place that allow for good links between subjects, such as history, geography and art. Pupils have been involved in planning the topics and consequently feel that the topics are relevant to them and support them in their learning. Older pupils are supported in their personal development through an annual residential trip to Condover Hall, where they take part in a range of outdoor activities. The comment of one pupil that 'managing to scale the climbing wall was scary but also a great accomplishment' indicated the positive impact that the additional activities that the school arranges have on pupils' personal and social development.
- Pupils' learning is further supported through a good range of clubs and after-school activities. These include a choir, a languages club and a singing, dancing and drama club.
- The school has ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is incorporated within the curriculum. Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong and understand the need to support other people in society. For example, pupils in Year 2 raise money to sponsor a child in Sierra Leone and all pupils are involved in organising an annual coffee morning to support the work of the Macmillan Cancer charity. Pupils also learn about and understand fundamental British values, such as democracy and the right of law. While pupils are respectful and tolerant of the views of others, school leaders recognise that the development of a deep understanding of different faiths and beliefs is not yet as well developed as other aspects of this area of the school's work.
- Leaders have made sure that the additional sports funding is used extremely effectively. External sports coaches are employed to provide weekly physical education and sporting sessions that are closely matched to the ages and needs of all the pupils. The sports coaches have worked alongside teachers to develop their confidence and abilities in teaching this aspect of the curriculum. Pupils' fitness is measured to evaluate the impact that the sports provision has on their health and well-being. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including tag rugby, football for both girls and boys and a multi-sports club, further enhance the opportunities available to the pupils.

Governance of the school

- Governors have established strong and effective systems to ensure that they have a clear and well-informed view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work. They use a range of information to compare the outcomes of pupils at the school with other pupils nationally. They recognise that outcomes for some pupils have not, in recent years, been sufficiently high and have challenged leaders to bring about the necessary improvement. They have a good understanding of how the additional resources that are available to the school, including the pupil premium funding, are used and monitor the impact on pupil outcomes.
- They fulfil all their statutory duties fully. All governors have received recent training on aspects of safeguarding, including combating the risk of radicalisation or extremism and child sexual exploitation. This indicates the importance they place on this area of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- This aspect of the school's work is particularly strong. All staff are aware of their responsibilities in looking out for signs that might indicate that pupils are at risk, and are well trained in knowing what their responsibilities are. School leaders run and organise regular training and provide updates on good practice in protecting vulnerable pupils. Governors and leaders recently arranged for an external audit of safeguarding procedures in school to be carried out to ensure that policy and practice were fully compliant with all statutory requirements.
- Record-keeping is thorough and detailed and indicates that the school works closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and protected. School systems for ensuring that staff who are appointed to the school do not pose a threat to pupils are robust and effective. Leaders have shown that they are prepared to take difficult decisions in the best interests of pupils, regardless of opposition from members of pupils' families. This indicates the commitment that all staff have in ensuring that pupils' welfare is of the highest priority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils say that teachers make learning interesting and exciting. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that teachers create for them to take responsibility for their own learning and particularly enjoy the 'discovery' opportunities that take place in lessons. Relationships between adults and pupils are positive. Teachers set high expectations in terms of what pupils should achieve in lessons and pupils strive to meet these standards.
- Assessment is used well by teachers to monitor progress and to set targets for pupils to help them understand how they can improve their work.
- The teaching of reading is a strength within school. There is a systematic, whole-school approach to the teaching of phonics within reading. Teachers and teaching assistants accurately demonstrate the sounds that letters make with younger pupils and help them to use this knowledge to build words. Pupils develop a deep enjoyment in reading and are encouraged to continue their reading at home. There is a strong focus across all classes on ensuring that pupils understand what they are reading, and teachers ask well-chosen questions to test pupils' depth of understanding.
- Teachers ensure that the core skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught regularly and at levels that are appropriate to the ages of the pupils. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that pupils apply these skills in their independent writing. Good opportunities are created for pupils to write extended pieces of work, often linked to their topic work. Pupils are taught to use a joined-up style of writing, and teachers ensure that standards of presentation of written work are high.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have ensured there is a common policy in place for the teaching of core skills in mathematics. This has helped to ensure that pupils are confident and competent in activities such as addition, multiplication and using fractions and decimals. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 were observed using their mathematical knowledge to work independently and accurately in calculating the

volume of various shapes.

- The use of problem-solving involving reasoning within mathematics is being developed and embedded across the school. However, too often the activities that are set for the most able pupils do not require them to think deeply and are easily within their capacity. This limits progress for these pupils. Opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other subjects are not as well developed as those for applying writing skills.
- There is a lack of consistency in the use of questioning by teachers. There are too many occasions when teachers pose easy questions that do not require pupils to think deeply, especially the most able pupils.
- A minority of parents who responded to the Parent View survey felt that their child did not receive an appropriate amount of homework. However, this view was not supported by evidence gathered during the inspection. Homework set by teachers is linked well to the learning that is taking place in school. Pupils felt that homework was useful and the amount that they had to do was about right. One pupil commented that 'project homework is a good way of getting the family to work together'. The majority of parents who were spoken to or who responded to the online survey were of the view that they felt that homework was appropriate and of value.
- Classrooms are attractive and well-resourced areas. Displays both in the classrooms and around school celebrate pupils' achievements and provide them with useful prompts for learning.
- Teaching assistants work well alongside teachers and provide valuable support to pupils. They are particularly effective in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and are skilled in breaking learning activities down into small stages that enable these pupils to make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are polite, well mannered and show consideration for each other and towards adults. Older pupils enjoy the opportunities they are provided with to play with and support younger children on the playgrounds.
- The school council provides pupils with valuable opportunities to take on responsibility. Representatives from the school council are involved in interviewing prospective members of staff, and their views and opinions are respected and valued by school leaders.
- In each class in school during the inspection, class 'ambassadors' met and greeted inspectors and explained the purpose of the lesson. Ambassadors are used to guide visitors around the school and demonstrate through their positive attitudes and articulate comments that they take a pride in their school. These attitudes are mirrored by other pupils in school who were keen to talk about their appreciation for the opportunities that Jerome Primary School offers them.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how the school supports them in keeping safe.

The assemblies that are led by representatives of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children help pupils understand how they can ensure their own safety, and the potential dangers that face them in the wider world. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe online and understand the need to not give out personal information to people they do not know when using the internet.

- Pupils say that bullying is rare in school. They are confident that, if it was to occur, any of the adults in school would take effective action to deal with it and prevent it from reoccurring.
- While pupils show compassion for other people, their depth of knowledge of the beliefs and faiths across a range of religions is not fully secure. This is an aspect of the school's work that leaders are already taking action to address.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. They take pride in their work and recognise that this helps them to learn.
- Pupils are well behaved both in classrooms and at less structured times, such as lunchtime and breaktime. Lunchtime staff work well with pupils to support them in their play and also acknowledge and celebrate good behaviour. The weekly 'Golden Table' that is set up in the dining hall provides a special lunchtime experience to reward pupils who have shown particularly positive behaviour.
- Attendance has improved over the past year and is now broadly in line with the national average. School leaders have taken strong and appropriate action to ensure that parents recognise the need for their children to attend school regularly and on time. Parents are required to attend a meeting with the headteacher if attendance falls below the school's required standard. Leaders make good use of the educational welfare officer to support families. However, despite this, attendance for a small proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below that of other pupils in school.
- The before- and after-school clubs are valued by pupils and parents. They are well organised and provide pupils with a friendly and secure place to begin and end the school day.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, the proportions of pupils in Year 6 that achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average. Progress was stronger in writing than in reading and mathematics. Year 6 pupils also achieved similar standards to the national average in grammar, punctuation and spelling and in science. Boys' attainment was higher than that of girls in both reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' outcomes in Year 2 in 2016 were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 2 are working at levels that are appropriate for their age in reading and mathematics and are making good progress.
- Evidence gathered during the inspection, including from the school's own assessment

information, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and from observations in lessons, indicate that the very large majority of pupils across the school are making good progress across all subjects and are working at standards that are at least typical for their age. An increasing proportion of pupils are now making faster progress. This is as a result of good teaching, based on high expectations of what pupils should achieve. There are no significant differences between the outcomes for boys and girls across the school.

- The proportions of pupils in key stage 2 in 2016 who were working at the higher levels in reading, writing and especially mathematics were below the national average. The most able pupils who are currently in school are now making better progress. School assessment information indicates that a greater proportion of pupils will achieve the higher levels of attainment this year. The most able pupils write extended pieces of work that show a good understanding of complex vocabulary and grammar. However, the levels of challenge for these pupils are still not consistently high enough across the school. This is also the case for the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in reading due to a strong focus on ensuring that phonics is taught effectively. Outcomes in the Year 1 national phonics screening check were above the national standard in 2016 and had risen steadily over a three-year period. Teachers ensure that pupils both develop the skills to recognise words and read fluently and also gain a good understanding of what they have read.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. The support for these pupils is now well planned to match their individual needs. All disadvantaged pupils in school receive additional support that is matched to their particular abilities. Trained and skilled teaching assistants lead weekly additional sessions in either reading, mathematics or writing. Progress is closely measured to ensure that differences in outcomes against other pupils nationally continue to diminish. Pupil premium funding is also used to provide nurture group provision for any disadvantaged pupils who would benefit from emotional support. This helps these pupils to cope well with the demands of school life.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as they move through the school. The leader of provision for these pupils has ensured that all staff have received training in ensuring that they have a good understanding of how they can best support these pupils. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities commented positively on how they were kept well informed about the progress that their children were making.
- By the time the pupils leave the school in Year 6, they are well prepared for their next stage of education. They have developed positive attitudes to learning and have a secure knowledge across all subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Children start at school with skills and knowledge that are slightly below those typical for their age. In 2016, the proportion of pupils who were at a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year was below the national average. However, the majority were well prepared for their next stage of education in Year 1. Evidence gathered during the inspection, including from the school's own assessment information, indicates that a far higher proportion of children will achieve a good level of development than in previous years. This is as a result of good teaching and

provision that is well matched to the needs and interests of the children. Children are now making at least good progress across all areas of learning.

- The early years leader provides strong and effective leadership. She identified that, in previous years, children were not making as much progress in reading, writing and number as in other areas of learning, and made well-planned changes to the provision. Children in both Nursery and Reception now take part in daily phonics sessions and develop a secure understanding of sounds and how to use them to recognise and build words. Children in the Reception class are encouraged to apply their phonic knowledge to spell words and write them in sentences.
- Both the indoor and outdoor classrooms are well resourced and set up to stimulate children's interest in learning. Children are guided well by all the adults in the early years provision to take responsibility for their learning. Children choose when they have a snack or a drink and understand that eating fruit can be beneficial to their health and well-being.
- The quality of questioning by adults in the early years provision is inconsistent. When it is used well, teachers and other adults ask questions that encourage children to answer in extended sentences, and this helps extend children's vocabulary and promotes language development. However, there are occasions when adults' questions are too superficial and do not require children to think deeply.
- Assessment systems in the early years provision are good. Staff carry out initial assessments as soon as children start in Nursery and use this information to plan appropriate learning activities. Parents are involved in the initial assessments and their contributions are valued by staff. Early identification of any difficulties or problems that may have an impact on children's learning helps ensure that support is provided quickly and appropriately. There are good links with outside agencies which are used to provide additional support, such as that provided by speech and language specialists.
- Children form positive relationships with each other and with adults. All staff set high expectations in terms of behaviour and, as a result, there is an orderly and calm atmosphere that is conducive to children's learning.
- Additional funding is used effectively to enable disadvantaged children to make good progress. Teachers and other staff have a clear understanding that a child's social or economic background must not be a barrier to them achieving good outcomes. This is indicative of the whole-school commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity.

School details

Unique reference number	124175
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10025244

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Brothwell
Headteacher	Claire Sarginson
Telephone number	01543 278595
Website	www.jerome.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@jerome-primary.org
Date of previous inspection	11–12 October 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the most recent key stage 2 results and governors' annual statement on its website.
- Jerome Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those who are supported by the pupil premium funding, is below average.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below that in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school club for its pupils.
- The headteacher took up her post in April 2015.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 13 lessons or parts of lesson. A number of these observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met with a group of pupils, including members of the school council. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessments and records of pupils' progress, the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance, records of how teaching is managed and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the two assistant headteachers. The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspectors took account of the 37 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 17 free text responses from parents. They also talked to parents at the end of the school day. They also considered the four responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Adam Hewett, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Demmerling	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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