

Flash Ley Primary School

Hawksmoor Road, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 9DR

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In 2016, the standards pupils reached by the end of Year 6 were below average in English and mathematics.
- New initiatives introduced by the co-acting headteachers have not had enough time to impact on pupils' attainment overall.
- Leaders have not yet ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. As a result, pupils' progress varies too much in some year groups.
- Pupils' progress in reading is hampered because pupils do not yet have access to a wide range of reading materials.
- In some classes, the difference is too wide between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils. Leaders are responding proactively to the recent external review of the school's use of funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- The achievement of pupils in English and mathematics is not yet consistent. Too few middle-ability pupils reach their full potential because they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.
- Governors have not held leaders to account for performance in the past. Governors are now acting with greater urgency following a review of governance.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are beginning to address variations in the quality of teaching. Leaders have provided stability during a period of change.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. As a result, they are happy, confident and achieve well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the mainstream school and in the speech and language unit make good progress. Individualised programmes of support for pupils are effective.
- Pupils are thoughtful, well-mannered and articulate. Pupils are proud of their school. They demonstrate great optimism and resilience to change.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They behave well. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding and development are good.
- Safeguarding is effective and pupils feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement, particularly for middle ability and disadvantaged pupils, and improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide work for pupils that is accurately matched to the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils
 - teachers set work that is appropriately challenging to accelerate the progress pupils make
 - pupils access a wide range of reading materials that are matched to their needs and inspire them to read widely and often
 - teachers' subject knowledge is developed in mathematics, so that pupils regularly have opportunities to reason and solve problems.
- Strengthen leadership and governance by:
 - securing the appointment of a permanent headteacher
 - ensuring that senior leaders, middle leaders and governors evaluate the impact of new initiatives, review their effectiveness and make adaptations where needed
 - further developing the role of governors to challenge and hold leaders to account more precisely for pupils' outcomes from the extended provision for two-year-olds to outcomes at the end of key stage 2.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the school has been through what staff and governors describe as a 'unique experience'. In October 2015, due to a health and safety issue of a toxic gas on the school site, pupils and staff were evacuated from the building at very short notice. Temporary accommodation was swiftly arranged by the local authority. For a period of 15 months, pupils were educated at three different sites across Stafford. Pupils recently returned to the school site in January 2017. High staff turnover during this period has affected the progress made by pupils in some year groups.
- The effectiveness of leadership and governance over time has been variable. Until more recently, governors have not sufficiently held leaders to account for outcomes across the school. As a result, rates of progress and attainment were below those found nationally at key stages 1 and 2 in 2016.
- Pupils currently on roll are not yet making consistently strong progress. Pupils' books show signs of better rates of progress but improvements are not embedded or sustained.
- The school's work is not yet securing strong rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils. Historically, gaps between this group of pupils and other pupils nationally have been wide. This under-achievement is being addressed by leaders but has not been fully reversed.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that teaching is of a consistently high standard across the school. Leaders have introduced a range of initiatives to address variation but these are at an early stage of development.
- The co-acting headteachers and governors have worked with determination to ensure stability of provision for pupils while continuing to drive improvements in teaching and learning. They know there is more to be done and have proactively commissioned external reports on the use of pupil premium funding and governance.
- The deputy headteachers were appointed as co-acting headteachers in September 2016 and ably provide leadership, drive and a vision for the school. They have spent a great deal of time supporting the emotional well-being and welfare of pupils, parents and staff while on the temporary sites. The co-acting headteachers managed a smooth transition back to the school site. Parents are extremely positive about how well the school has supported their children during this period of instability and change.
- More recently, with the support of a local leader of education, the co-acting headteachers have introduced robust systems for the performance management of teaching staff and non-teaching staff. Leaders have an honest view of the school's effectiveness, strengths and areas for development. The co-acting headteachers combine a positive, optimistic approach with a determination to move the school forward which is shared by other leaders in school.
- The co-acting headteachers have introduced systems to track the progress of pupils regularly and review progress in pupils' books. Leaders now regularly observe teaching and provide teachers with clear feedback on what is going well and how teaching can be improved. The local authority has been proactive in supporting school leaders to

introduce accountability measures across the school.

- The senior leadership team has been restructured to include leaders of the school's speech and language unit, early years and the extended provision for two-year-olds. Leaders at all levels have a sharper focus on pupils' progress and a greater understanding of the progress of groups of pupils.
- Leaders at all levels are working with teachers to improve their practice. Good practice within school is being shared. Staff have benefited from opportunities to observe good practice in other schools. Leaders' monitoring records show that teaching is improving.
- In this academic year, leaders have implemented changes to teaching in reading, writing and mathematics. New programmes to support pupils who need to catch up have been introduced from January 2017. While the evaluation of the impact of this work is at an early stage, school information shows that pupils have made greater progress since returning to the Flash Leys school site. Leaders at all levels are now in a position to evaluate the impact of new initiatives, to identify which are most effective in accelerating pupils' progress and how good practice can be disseminated across the school.
- Leaders are now checking the accuracy of teachers' assessments with more frequency. In this school year, leaders introduced a new marking and assessment policy as well as new approaches to the teaching of writing and mathematics. New initiatives in teaching and assessment are at an early stage of development. Some teachers are more confident while others are having more support.
- The curriculum is now broad and balanced. When taught at different centres in Stafford, school days were shorter due to the transport of pupils. The breadth of the curriculum was affected by the constraints of the temporary spaces. For example, the teaching of physical education was limited and pupils did not have access to after-school clubs. The curriculum now covers all the national curriculum areas for primary pupils. Pupils benefit from learning both French and Spanish in the school. Books show that writing is developed through cross-curricular topic work which includes history, geography and science. Topics seen in books included the Great Fire of London in key stage 1, evolution and life cycles in key stage 2 and mountains and rivers in key stage 2. A visit to Thinktank, the science museum in Birmingham, enhanced a science topic on space. Pupils were particularly enthusiastic about the visit to the planetarium at the museum. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities and pupils are keen to participate in the clubs. They are popular and oversubscribed.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's values of 'aiming high, keep trying when faced with adversity, where working together makes us stronger' underpin all aspects of school life. As a result, pupils learn tolerance and respect for each other. Pupils learn about democracy through the curriculum and their election to leadership roles in school such as the school council, head boy and head girl.
- Leaders have recently commissioned a review of pupil premium funding. Pupil premium funding is now targeted more effectively, with a more focused emphasis on the pupils who need to catch up. In key stage 2, there are signs that recent programmes introduced to support disadvantaged pupils in mathematics, reading and writing are having a positive impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- PE and sport premium funding is used well to employ sports coaches who deliver

physical education lessons and offer a range of extra-curricular sports clubs. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy.

- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively to provide support for pupils in the mainstream school and the speech and language unit. Support is tailored to the needs of the pupils. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The school has received intensive support from the local authority and local leader of education since the last inspection. Support for leaders has been effective in helping the co-acting headteachers tackle weaknesses in teaching and implement improvements to leadership. Staff training, in particular training for middle leaders, is resulting in better systems for teaching and more methodical monitoring of pupils' progress.

Governance of the school

- Governance is improving. Since the last inspection, a comprehensive review of governance has taken place with the local authority. The review was commissioned because governance was weak. Governors did not provide enough support to leaders or hold them to account with sufficient rigour. Governors have responded proactively to the review. They now have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The governing body is recruiting a permanent headteacher. Governors recognise the importance of having a full leadership team in place to drive improvements in the school.
- Governors have worked with the local authority officers to improve their skills and knowledge. They understand their roles and responsibilities and now have a clear focus on safeguarding and the quality of teaching. However, governors have not been focused enough on understanding pupil performance data from the extended provision for two-year-olds to achievement of pupils by the end of Year 6. Governors are now receiving regular updates about pupils' progress. Governing body minutes show that governors' skills of challenging the underperformance of groups of pupils are developing.
- Governors have reviewed their skills and have actively sought to appoint governors with the necessary skills to work on the governing body.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created a positive vigilant ethos and culture of safeguarding. Leaders ensure that systems for safeguarding are robust. Record-keeping systems are regularly checked and updated. Policies and procedures meet statutory requirements. Staff training is effective. Staff are regularly trained on updates and school procedures. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Partnerships with external agencies are strong. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to provide early help and provides advice and guidance to parents

about partner agencies who can offer support.

- The safeguarding arrangements throughout the early years (pre-school provision for two-year-olds, provision for three-year-olds and children in the nursery and Reception classes) is well managed. All welfare requirements are fully met.
- The parents who spoke to inspectors commented positively about the transition back to the Flash Ley site because leaders and staff had focused on pupils' well-being and safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has been inconsistent in different year groups. Teachers are not always providing pupils with work that is matched to their ability. This results in some pupils finding the work too easy and some pupils not having the skills or knowledge to access the work.
- Teachers' expectations in some lessons are not challenging enough, with pupils capable of moving forward in their learning at a faster rate. For example, in some mathematics books, pupils are spending too long practising skills they have already mastered rather than moving on to reasoning and problem-solving.
- Pupils who are falling behind are now being identified at an earlier stage. Some of these pupils have not made enough progress across the key stage. Leaders and teachers use assessment information to identify pupils who need to catch up. Work in books shows that, in most classes, the pupils identified are now starting to make more progress because teachers are focusing more sharply on pupils' gaps in learning.
- Pupils show an enjoyment of reading; they are enthusiastic about the school library area. However, while being taught at other centres in Stafford, pupils have not had access to a wide range of reading materials, including poetry. Teachers have not planned for pupils to explore a wide range of authors, genres of books or modern fiction from a range of cultures. This limits pupils' ability to discuss and give reasons for their choices of books. During the inspection, inspectors read with groups of pupils. The books pupils are reading do not always match the ability of the pupils. This results in some pupils' reading books that are not challenging enough.
- The teaching of phonics is effective because staff have a good subject knowledge. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to use their phonics knowledge throughout the day in different lessons. Work in books shows that pupils are transferring their phonics skills, for example through the use of phonics in spelling patterns in key stage 1. The teaching of spelling and grammar is a strength because pupils use their knowledge and skills in their writing.
- Writing work in books shows that pupils have good opportunities to write in different areas across the curriculum. The teaching engages pupils in discussions about topical events, for example when writing about environmental issues in newspaper reports. Pupils have good opportunities to edit and redraft their work. Teachers' expectations of presentation are clear in writing books. A recent visit from a storyteller engaged pupils effectively. Pupils see themselves as writers because teachers provide advice and guidance on how to develop their writing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the

speech and language unit, are well supported. There is a good balance of pupils working closely with adults and opportunities to work with their peers or independently. Teachers monitor the individualised programmes of support and adapt work to the needs of the pupil.

- Regular homework is set in reading and spelling. The topic homework is on display in school. The majority of parents agree that their child receives homework appropriate for their age.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils understand why they were taught in different sites for a period of time. Pupils describe the move to the other sites as a good move because it made them realise how lucky they are at Flash Ley. Pupils' attitudes to change are extremely positive and they have shown great resilience.
- Pupils say they learned to work as a team because of the limited resources at the Chetwynd centre and daily transport to the different sites. Pupils overwhelmingly say how good it is to be back at the Flash Ley school site.
- Pupils are proud of their school. The school is a warm, welcoming place for pupils. Leaders foster and promote a culture where pupils are respected and valued. Staff know the pupils well; they are sensitive to their individual needs. Pupils support each other in lessons and on the playground. They have a strong sense of care for one another.
- Pupils are confident and articulate. Staff promote a school culture that develops the attitudes of pupils to aim high, be responsible, never give up, be resilient, reflect as a learner and work as a team. The school's use of superheroes to exemplify these qualities has captured the imagination of the pupils. Pupils reflect on which superheroes' powers they have used in lessons. Pupils have good self-awareness and are confident to explore new learning. These skills and attitudes to learning and new experiences will serve pupils well as they progress on to their next stage of education.
- Pupils are taught to respect each other and the views and beliefs of others. Special topics, cultural and religious festivals and celebrations improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of different religious and cultural traditions. These activities, including visits to places of worship, theatres and music performances make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils say they know what to do if someone is bullying in school. They are confident that adults respond to any concerns swiftly. Pupils say instances of bullying are rare. Pupils understand about different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe on the internet and social media. All parents who completed the online questionnaire agreed that their child feels safe in school.
- Pupils take on roles of responsibility, such as being school councillors, peer mentoring, and being a head boy or head girl. Pupils value the opportunities they have. Pupils actively get involved in their local community, for example by carol singing in care

homes locally at Christmas.

- The school has worked hard to develop an environment where pupils have well-designed and well-resourced learning spaces. Pupils make good use of the school building and grounds to develop their understanding of environmental issues. Pupils appreciate and respect their school environment.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well-mannered, friendly and polite, and very keen to talk about their school. Pupils conduct themselves well as they move around school. At lunchtimes, pupils play happily and cooperatively alongside each other.
- Pupils are respectful and well-mannered. They form good relationships with each other and staff. Pupils are usually attentive and well-behaved in lessons. In some lessons, however, if the work is not demanding enough, pupils lose focus and at times sit quietly or chat to their peers without learning or making progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils' attendance has improved since returning to Flash Ley and is in line with the national average. The school's attendance officer works closely with families to ensure that pupils are safe and attend school on time.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress. This reflects the inconsistencies in teaching and learning across the school. Consequently, pupils are not being prepared well enough for the next stage of their education.
- Last year's test results show that pupils in Year 6 made more progress in reading and mathematics than in writing. Currently, across the school there are signs of improvement. Pupils are making more progress this year, particularly in writing. While it is too early to see the results of recent changes to teaching and assessment approaches, the school's own assessment information shows that pupils in most classes are making more accelerated progress. This progress is seen in writing and mathematics. Pupils are now beginning to catch up to where they should be, given their starting points.
- For pupils in both key stages 1 and 2, there is a legacy of disruption to teaching through changes in staffing, in addition to being taught off site with reduced teaching time for a prolonged period. Staff are addressing these gaps and work in books shows pupils have made greater progress since January 2017 when pupils returned to the school site.
- In 2016, the proportion of middle-ability pupils making expected progress was low. Teachers and leaders are monitoring the progress of these pupils closely. Rates of progress are inconsistent in some classes for middle ability pupils because the match of the work to the needs of the child is not always precise enough.
- There are signs of improvement for disadvantaged pupils. Teaching is starting to

address differences between their progress and other pupils. Differences in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally last year was wide in both key stages 1 and 2. School information indicates that gaps are starting to diminish in some year groups but there is still more work to be done.

- The most able pupils are making better progress in writing. Books show they are using their skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing. In mathematics most-able pupils are making good progress.
- Pupils' progress in reading has been slowed because of the reduced access to a wide range of reading materials at the Chetwynd Centre. Leaders are addressing this issue in key stage 1 but are yet to purchase more resources for pupils in key stage 2. Inspectors listened to pupils read. Pupils talked of their enjoyment of reading but they are not always inspired to read widely. Their knowledge gained from different types of reading, such as poetry, modern fiction and books from other cultures and traditions is limited. This is inhibiting their mastery of language and the choices they make when selecting books.
- Since the last inspection, phonics outcomes have dipped. In 2016, two thirds of the Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard in phonics. More recently, as a result of improved teaching in phonics, the pupils currently in Year 1 are making good progress with their phonics skills. Pupils in key stage 1 are using their phonics skills with confidence when reading unfamiliar words.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress in the speech and language unit. Monitoring of the progress of pupils is effective. The majority of pupils from the speech and language unit reintegrate into mainstream schools.
- Pupils' work in books across a range of subjects including science, history and geography shows that pupils have good opportunities to write at length and independently in different areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils who learn English as an additional language or who have joined the school during the school year are quickly integrated into the school. They are well supported with additional programmes to develop their spoken English skills and as a result make good progress with spoken English.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress in the early years. The majority of two-year-old children enter with skills below those expected for their age. Most pupils enter nursery with much lower starting points than is usual for their age. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for key stage 1. Outcomes in early years have improved over the past two years.
- The pre-school extended provision for two- and three-year-old children is well managed. Children settle quickly and are supported by experienced staff who quickly develop their spoken language. Children in this provision are happy and settled. They demonstrate this through their enthusiasm and confidence both indoors and outdoors.
- Staff model language effectively throughout the early years. They are skilled at allowing children time to respond to their questions and prompts. Staff make sure that

activities they plan interest boys and girls. In the nursery, early writing skills are developed well indoors and outdoors. Children are inquisitive learners. They enjoy using bags filled with paint to make marks and watch them disappear. Children handle equipment with dexterity. Their fine motor skills are being developed through thoughtful provision that engages their interests and imagination.

- Key workers build warm, positive relationships with the children and their families. Parents value the support their children receive. There is good communication with parents and support for the transition of pupils between groups in early years and into key stage 1.
- Staff have a good knowledge of the early years assessment requirements. Assessments of children are accurate. Leaders in early years have robust systems for checking children's understanding and use this to plan their next steps in learning. Leaders and staff have been supported by the local authority to improve consistency in assessment judgements in early years since the last inspection. For children currently in Reception, the historical achievement gaps between boys and girls are closing.
- Outcomes are good because activities in the early years classes are linked to the children's experiences. Children enjoy the physical activity of the daily one-kilometre challenge in their playground. They cooperate well together. Children have experience of a broad range of stimulating indoor and outdoor experiences in safe, well-organised areas. The resources are attractive, and they capture the children's interest and curiosity.
- Children behave well across the early years provision. Children take turns and they listen well to adults and to each other. Well-established routines as well as high expectations from all staff enable children to feel secure and calm.
- Good teaching combined with good pastoral support for children and families in all early years provision means that the children get off to a good start. The school works closely with families to support transition from each stage within early years. Partnerships to support families with early help and home visits support children's induction in early years.
- The early years leader provides good leadership and management of early years. The additional pre-school provision for two-year-olds and funded three-year-olds has enhanced the school's early years provision by providing greater choice for families in the locality. For a period of 15 months, the extended provision and the nursery were on a different site to Reception. Since returning to the same site in January 2017, the leader of the extended provision is working closely with the early years leader to ensure that there is a shared vision for early years.

School details

Unique reference number	124205
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10025188

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Wilson
Co-acting Headteachers	Karan Williams and Kerri Fenton
Telephone number	01785 356642
Website	www.flashley.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@flashley.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is an average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Other pupils come from a range of backgrounds representing minority ethnic groups. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- From October 2015 to January 2017 pupils from Flash Ley Primary were taught at three separate locations. Two-year-olds and nursery children were taught at Stafford Manor High School, pupils in Reception to Year 6 at the Chetwynd Centre and pupils in the Reception and key stage 1 speech and language Unit at Tillington Manor Primary School. There has been a change in pupil numbers since the last inspection with 90 pupils leaving the school while the school was in temporary accommodation.
- The school operates a speech and language resource unit for 10 pupils aged four to seven years. Some pupils come from other schools within the county. From October

2015, the school's speech and language unit has been temporarily based at Tillington Manor Primary School and continues to be based off-site.

- The governing body extended provision admitting two-year-old children and three-year-olds to nursery education funded places. There are currently 26 two-year-old children in school. The provision has five qualified staff who are key workers and manage no more than four children. There are 14 nursery education funded three-year-old children in the pre-school setting. All of these children in both of these pre-school settings attend part time.
- The school has a nursery class; children attend part time. There is one Reception class and the children attend full time.
- In key stage 1, there is a Year 1 class, one Year 2 class and one mixed Year 1 and 2 class. In Years 3 and 4 there are two classes per year group. In Years 5 and 6 there is one class per year.
- The headteacher resigned in July 2016. Governors temporarily appointed the two deputy headteachers as co-acting headteachers from September 2016.
- Since the previous inspection, nine teachers and seven teaching assistants have left the school.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- In 2016, the school met government floor standards, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Following the last inspection, Staffordshire local authority commissioned a local leader of education to support leaders and governors. The local authority completed a review of governance in 2016. The local leader of education has undertaken a review of pupil premium funding in January 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes and through a series of learning walks around the school. Most observations were joint observations with one of the two co-acting headteachers. While visiting lessons, inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and talked to pupils about their learning. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lunchtimes and at break to seek their views about the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and at other times. An assembly was observed.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from across the school. Inspectors visited the speech and language unit at Tillington Manor Primary School.
- Inspectors met with the two co-acting headteachers, middle leaders in school, the local leader of education commissioned by the local authority and four governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with the local authority district manager for improvement.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation on safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, information about pupils' achievement, progress and performance, governing body minutes and information related to safeguarding, teaching, behaviour and attendance. Local authority reports and external reviews of governance and pupil premium funding were reviewed.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents and carers to seek their views about the school. Inspectors considered the 32 responses from parents to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors considered the views of 23 members of staff who completed the online inspection questionnaire. The views of 98 pupils who completed the online survey were considered by inspectors.

Inspection team

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