

Thomas Russell Junior School

Gilmour Lane, Barton-Under-Needwood, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 8EU

Inspection dates

15–16 January 2019

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- This is an outstanding and improving school. The inspirational headteacher has ensured that all aspects of the school's work are of a very high quality.
- Leaders have planned a rich and varied curriculum. It leads to outstanding academic outcomes and promotes personal development and exemplary behaviour very well.
- Teaching is consistently strong. Staff use their secure subject knowledge, probing questions and a range of resources to help pupils to complete activities thoroughly, accurately and at pace.
- Pupils reach high standards of attainment in all subjects. As a result of their enthusiasm to learn, they make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of their writing is particularly high.
- Pupils excel in many subjects. Current pupils are making substantial progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and for adult life. They develop the skills that they need to be successful learners, so they can thrive when they move on to secondary school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Fundamental British values and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development underpin the ethos of the school.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and during social time. Their impeccable conduct reflects the school's excellent strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. Pupils pride themselves in regulating their own behaviour.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average and almost all pupils have excellent attendance. Pupils rarely miss a day of school.
- Pupils feel safe and the school has a strong safeguarding culture. Staff are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern.
- Leaders and staff work well with parents and carers. A very large majority of parents believe that the school is well led and managed, and they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Governance is strong, and governors are highly ambitious for the school. They have a wide range of skills and experience that they use to hold leaders to close account.
- Pupils are not given regular opportunities to fully develop their reasoning and decision-making skills in lessons.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should take further action to ensure that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to fully develop their reasoning and decision-making skills in lessons.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- This is an outstanding school that the inspirational headteacher continues to improve. She has ensured that all aspects of the school's work are consistently strong and encourages all the staff to make them even better.
- The headteacher, supported by other leaders and governors, has developed and sustained an ambitious culture. Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff. They lead by example. There is a strong team ethos, and relationships are positive and productive.
- Leaders and managers have a deep and accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness. They closely monitor the quality of education by thoroughly analysing a range of information. Leaders consistently focus on the impact of their actions to develop the school further.
- Leaders use high-quality professional development opportunities to encourage, challenge and support staff to continue to improve their practice. Staff learn from each other and value the training that they receive.
- Subject leaders play an important role in ensuring that teaching is highly effective across the school. They work closely with their teams to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- The broad and balanced curriculum inspires pupils to learn. The wide range of subjects helps pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding in all aspects of their education. The curriculum leads to outstanding academic outcomes and promotes personal development and excellent conduct very well. Staff focus on developing 'responsibility, resilience and respect'.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy residential visits, participate in many sporting activities and have access to a range of clubs which help to develop their skills and interests. For example, many pupils go to football, netball, cricket, snowboarding, yoga, art, computing and cookery clubs. The school also has a high-quality choir.
- Staff prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a core part of the school's curriculum. Fundamental British values underpin the ethos of the school. Pupils are taught about cultures that are different to their own so that they are tolerant and respectful of the beliefs of other people. Leaders and staff promote diversity and equality of opportunity exceptionally well.
- Additional funding is used effectively to improve outcomes for pupils. Funding for special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the pupil premium are used to support staffing and interventions to improve the progress made by targeted pupils. Disadvantaged pupils also benefit from opportunities for personal development because of the pupil premium funding.
- Sports funding has been used well to enhance the good-quality provision that was already in place at the school. It provides pupils with access to specialist clubs, facilitates more activities during social time and funds further staff training. Sports

funding has helped pupils, including those who did not take regular exercise, become more active.

- Leaders and staff work well with parents. Regular contact, attendance at events and close working relationships between parents and staff help the pupils to do well at the school. Weekly newsletters, the school's website and parent 'workshops' also help communication between the school and families. The 'parent forum' engages parents effectively with the wider decision-making process of the school. A very large majority of parents who made their views known during the inspection believe that the school is well led and managed and would recommend the school to another parent.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong, as governors offer appropriate support and challenge to leaders. They have a wide range of skills and experience that they use to hold leaders to close account. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work well with leaders to strive for further improvement.
- Governors are highly ambitious for the school. Their meetings concentrate on the school's priorities and consistently focus on improving outcomes for all pupils.
- Governors access a range of training that helps them to stay well informed. They carry out their statutory duties efficiently and ensure that resources are well managed, that additional funding is used effectively and that safeguarding procedures are robust.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher has ensured that staff are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern. Staff have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, including those that are pertinent to the local area. They know how to recognise signs that a pupil may be at risk.
- Staff work well with parents and outside agencies to help to protect pupils. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils know about the potential dangers of the internet and they learn about water and fire safety.
- Appropriate checks are made on staff and visitors. Record keeping is thorough, and information is stored securely. Keeping children safe is seen as everyone's responsibility as part of the school's strong safeguarding culture. Although incidents are rare, staff know that 'it could happen here'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is consistently strong throughout the school. Staff have high expectations of all pupils and pupils are keen to learn.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons. They listen attentively, concentrate fully and work productively with each other and with staff. Pupils are highly motivated to do the best that they can.
- Teachers skilfully plan sequences of lessons that build on prior learning. Activities are

designed to help pupils with different starting points make strong progress. Links that are made between different subjects enhance pupils' understanding. Pupils take many opportunities to develop their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum.

- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to support pupils' learning. All staff use questioning very well to check pupils' understanding and help them think deeply about the subjects that they are studying. Most staff closely monitor pupils' progress in lessons to inform subsequent activities. This helps all groups of pupils make substantial progress.
- Staff work well together. Teaching assistants are well deployed and best practice is shared. Staff plan activities together, watch each other teach and use professional development opportunities to further refine their practice.
- Learning time is used well and pupils are encouraged to complete activities thoroughly, accurately and at pace. Staff use a wide range of different resources to enhance pupils' learning experiences.
- Staff give pupils excellent verbal and written feedback in line with the school's policy. Pupils use this effectively to help them to improve their work.
- Assessment is accurate. The school gives parents clear information about how their children are progressing, how well they are doing in relation to the standards expected and what they need to do to improve. Regular reports and meetings give parents opportunities to review their child's progress with staff.
- The quality of work in pupils' books is exemplary. Standards are high, and work is very well presented. However, planning does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop reasoning skills or make their own judgements, particularly in mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. As a result of high expectations, pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- Pupils understand how their learning equips them for the next stage of their education and adult life. They consider issues in a thoughtful way and they are respectful, tolerant and caring.
- Staff actively support all aspects of pupils' welfare. Physical well-being is promoted through opportunities for all pupils to take regular exercise and healthy eating is encouraged. Staff also support pupils' emotional well-being so that pupils can make informed choices about maintaining their mental health. Pupils are well cared for and can explain clearly how to keep themselves healthy.
- Pupils feel safe. They have an appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and they know how to stay safe online.
- Staff and pupils deal effectively with the very rare instances of bullying that take place. Pupils challenge unkindness and they work well with staff to prevent any forms of

bullying. Pupils are confident that staff would help them to resolve any issues should they arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils' impeccable conduct reflects the school's excellent strategies to promote high standards of behaviour.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons and during social time. They pride themselves in regulating their own behaviour as they have been taught to behave well because it is the right thing to do.
- The vast majority of pupils are always polite and considerate. There have been no permanent exclusions and fixed-term exclusions are very rare. The very few pupils who find it more challenging to manage their own behaviour have been well supported to improve their conduct.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day of school. Attendance is consistently above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils reach high standards of attainment in all subjects. Over time, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been well above the national averages.
- Outcomes in writing are exceptional. Pupils are given many opportunities to write at length and for different purposes. All groups of pupils make excellent progress and attain extremely well. In 2018, attainment in writing was in the top 1% of all schools nationally.
- Outcomes in reading are very strong. Pupils attain consistently well and, as a result of a meticulously planned revised approach to the teaching of reading, pupils made outstanding progress last year. In 2018, attainment in reading was in the top 7% of all schools.
- Over the past three years, attainment in mathematics has been in the top 10% of all schools. Pupils made very strong progress in mathematics in 2016 and 2017, but progress did not match the school's usual high standards in 2018. Leaders analysed the outcomes very closely to inform further action. As a result, current pupils are making excellent progress in mathematics.
- All groups of pupils usually make very strong progress from their different starting points. The most able pupils are challenged to attain highly; a greater proportion of pupils achieve higher standards than the national average. Disadvantaged pupils attain better outcomes than other pupils nationally. As a result of targeted support, most pupils with SEND make excellent progress from their starting points
- Current pupils, in every year group, are making substantial and sustained progress across the curriculum. Pupils read widely and often, and they can articulate their knowledge and understanding clearly and confidently.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education and for adult life. They are helped to develop the skills that they need to be successful learners and they attain excellent academic outcomes. Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is

designed to support learning at the local secondary school and high-quality transition arrangements are in place. Information provided by the secondary school shows that former pupils of Thomas Russell Junior School consistently gain GCSE results that are well above the national averages.

School details

Unique reference number	124150
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10058508

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Terry Wells
Headteacher	Shelley Sharpe
Telephone number	01283 247505
Website	www.thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@thomasrussell-junior.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 and 18 June 2014

Information about this school

- Thomas Russell Junior School is an average-sized school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND, including those who have an education, health and care plan, is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited a range of lessons and observed learning on both days of the inspection. Leaders joined inspectors on seven short visits to classes on the second day.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally and observed behaviour in lessons and during social time.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders and a group of staff. The lead inspector analysed 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The lead inspector met eight governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also met with a consultant who supports the school.
- The lead inspector considered 157 responses and 84 free-text comments made by parents via Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Team inspectors spoke to parents at the start of the first day of the inspection.
- Various documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, and information about pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance. Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and inspectors looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Simon Mosley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Mary Maybank	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019