

Flash Ley Primary School

Hawksmoor Road, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 9DR

Inspection dates

19–20 June 2019

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the school. However, they have not yet ensured that teaching is consistently good. Their efforts to improve the school's curriculum and the quality of teaching have been hampered by staffing difficulties.
- Across the school, including in early years, teachers do not use assessment information to plan activities that meet pupils' needs and abilities closely enough. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils, especially in writing.
- Provision in the early years requires improvement. Sometimes work is too difficult for the least able children or too easy for the most able children.
- The science curriculum does not provide appropriate coverage of knowledge and skills.
- Although pupils' progress is improving, gaps remain between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers. Boys do not achieve as well as girls.
- In mathematics, teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to reason mathematically and solve problems. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their calculation skills.
- Although improvement plans focus on the right priorities, leaders do not evaluate the impact of their actions well enough.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils are safe at school and say that adults care for them well. However, leaders do not have a thorough enough understanding of the process for removing pupils from the school roll.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders are improving the school. They have started to take action to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics. There has been a clear focus on developing pupils' writing skills.
- Pupils are proud to attend Flash Ley Primary School. They display the school's 'super-hero' skills, which include self-belief, perseverance, working in a team and aiming high.
- The governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders.
- There is a calm atmosphere around the school. Pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils use their phonic skills to decode unfamiliar words and to spell with increasing accuracy.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are currently making strong progress because they are well supported.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders evaluate more precisely the impact that improvement actions are having on the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - there is full coverage of the science curriculum, so that pupils acquire the skills and knowledge required to make good progress
 - the correct procedures for removing pupils from the school roll are followed consistently.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information to plan activities that match pupils' needs more closely
 - developing pupils' fluency in calculation, including addition and subtraction
 - providing the most able pupils with work that is sufficiently challenging and enables them to make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in writing.
- Improve pupils' outcomes, including in the early years, by:
 - continuing to close the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers
 - ensuring that the progress and attainment of boys improves.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information effectively to plan activities that meet children's needs more closely
 - activities are sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has experienced some very difficult circumstances since the head joined two years ago. This has made it more difficult for the head to realise her clear and ambitious vision that reflects the school's value of 'aiming high'. She is keen for the school to succeed. Other leaders, staff and pupils share her goals. All concerned place pupils' welfare at the centre of their work.
- While leaders have begun to address weaknesses in the quality of teaching, there is further work to be done to ensure that the overall quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Leaders have focused on delivering high-quality staff training. However, instability in staffing has limited the effectiveness of these actions and slowed the pace of improvement.
- Leaders use a range of monitoring information to accurately evaluate the school's performance. They also seek advice and expertise from external bodies. Leaders use this information to formulate detailed school improvement plans. However, leaders do not measure the impact of their plans precisely enough. As a result, they do not have a clear enough understanding of which actions are most effective in improving teaching and pupils' outcomes. This means that planning of well-targeted future improvements is hindered.
- Staff speak positively about the school and are proud to work there. They respect leaders and feel well supported. Staff particularly value training opportunities, which have enabled them to improve their teaching skills.
- The English and mathematics leaders are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility and are enthusiastic about the part they play in supporting teaching and learning. With the support of senior leaders, they have been instrumental in organising training for staff. This training is beginning to secure a consistent approach to teaching in English and mathematics. However, the impact of the training is less noticeable in year groups where there has been instability in staffing.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is effective. Leaders know pupils and their individual needs well. They act on advice from external agencies and work closely with parents to ensure that these pupils receive the right support. As a result, pupils with SEND are now making good progress from their different starting points.
- The curriculum has been designed with a particular focus on developing pupils' language and providing enriching learning experiences. There is clear evidence in pupils' books and around the school to reflect a broad curriculum. There are opportunities to reinforce English and mathematical skills in other subjects. However, the science curriculum does not cover the necessary elements of the national curriculum. Due to this lack of coverage, pupils' progress in science is weak. In science lessons, work is not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities.
- Leaders enrich the curriculum through a range of trips and activities such as visiting a farm, going to the theatre and attending residential visits. Pupils speak enthusiastically about these experiences and how they have helped their learning. Pupils enjoy a

range of after-school clubs including drama, football, netball and art. These clubs are popular among the pupils.

- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They comment that their children are happy and safe and that they are well supported by staff. Parents speak highly of the changes that have been introduced over the past two years.
- Leaders have identified the barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders use additional funding to ensure that these pupils are included in all aspects of school life and that they are provided with extra support for their learning, where appropriate. However, this support does not always have sufficient impact.
- Leaders make good use of the primary school physical education and sport premium funding. Staff have received training to improve their skills in teaching gymnastics and dance. This has improved their confidence when teaching these areas of the curriculum. The school has also invested in a healthy lifestyles programme, which is helping pupils to make informed choices about how to keep themselves healthy.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. Pupils talk articulately about the difference between right and wrong and understand the consequences of their actions. They enjoy working as a team and show respect for the views of others. Pupils have an understanding of cultures and customs that exist beyond their immediate community.

Governance of the school

- Governors are clear about their responsibility to keep pupils safe. They have clear systems for monitoring safeguarding within the school. Governors monitor policy and practice carefully.
- Governors have an aspirational vision for the school and its pupils. They have a clear knowledge of pupils' starting points. Governors are aware that pupils' outcomes will only continue to improve as a result of a continued focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Governors say, 'We want all pupils to know that they can achieve anything and we are here to facilitate that.'
- Governors have a good understanding of the school's current priorities. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders. They use a range of information, including that gathered through visits to the school, to ask pertinent questions in order to bring about improvements.
- Governors know how leaders use additional funding and that the impact on improving pupils' outcomes is inconsistent.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of safeguarding which permeates the school. Staff are aware that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. They undertake regular training in relation to safeguarding and, as a result, they understand fully their roles and responsibilities. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding have undertaken relevant

training at an appropriate level to ensure that they fulfil their roles effectively.

- Detailed and accurate records are kept securely in school. The school has clear systems in place which are followed if a pupil makes a disclosure or allegation. Leaders work well with external agencies to provide the appropriate level of support and intervention to keep pupils safe.
- Procedures for the recruitment and checking of staff are thorough.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and they attribute this to the caring nature of the staff. Pupils say, 'We feel safe because the teachers protect us and they are always there for us.'
- Leaders know the procedure for removing pupils from the school's roll. In most cases, they follow this procedure correctly to ensure that pupils are safe. However, inspectors found one example where leaders had removed pupils from the school roll before they had received confirmation that these pupils were safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make strong progress and achieve the standards they are capable of. There is evidence of strong teaching in some year groups, but teaching is not consistently good across the school.
- Where teaching is less effective, pupils lose their focus on learning. In lessons where pupils have to listen for too long, some pupils become distracted. This disengagement was more noticeable in boys.
- When teaching matches pupils' abilities closely, they make strong progress. However, in too many classes teachers do not make effective use of assessment information to plan work that meets pupils' needs. This limits pupils' progress.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers and teaching assistants use open questions effectively to encourage pupils to think, deepen their learning and correct misconceptions. In these instances, pupils display confidence and they are not afraid to make mistakes. However, this effective use of questioning is not consistent across the school.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They consistently model language linked to mathematics and English grammar, which is mirrored by the pupils. This helps pupils to explain their understanding of a concept in lessons.
- Leaders and teaching staff work closely together. They share expertise and plan interesting learning experiences for pupils.
- Pupils across the school have developed a love of reading, which is fostered by leaders and staff. Pupils of all ages speak enthusiastically about reading and can name their favourite authors and books. The library is well furnished with a range of reading materials. Pupils say, 'I love reading because I put myself in the character's shoes and it takes me to another amazing world.'
- Across the school, there is a consistent approach to the teaching of writing. Teachers sequence activities carefully and develop pupils' use of descriptive vocabulary well. In

most classes, pupils make secure progress in their use of grammar and punctuation. Teachers do not challenge the most able pupils to write at greater depth, which limits their progress.

- In mathematics, teachers focus on developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, teaching does not develop pupils' fluency in basic calculations, including addition and subtraction, well enough. As a result, some pupils do not have a secure grasp of these important skills, particularly the least able pupils.
- Teaching staff effectively support pupils with SEND so that they engage fully in whole-class teaching. Teachers provide pupils with appropriate support materials and additional adults are used effectively to develop pupils' independence. Pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of learning and school life. Interventions, including those linked to the development of speech and language, are used to provide extra help for pupils with SEND. The interventions have had a positive impact on pupils' progress and are evaluated effectively by school leaders.

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 positive and happy at school. They are proud to attend Flash Ley Primary and they speak fondly of their school.
- In the main, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they enjoy coming to school. During the inspection, they were keen to talk to inspectors about their learning.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they attribute this to the caring nature of the staff. Pupils have positive relationships with staff, which were evident throughout the inspection. Relationships across the school are underpinned by mutual respect.
- Pupils work well as a team because the teachers have supported them to develop skills of collaboration. In less structured contexts, such as lunchtimes, pupils play cooperatively, engaging in a wide range of activities.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of keeping themselves safe online. From the outset, pupils have an understanding of how to keep healthy. They talk confidently about eating a balanced diet and engaging in regular exercise.
- Pupils are keen to take on roles across the school, such as being members of the school council. Leaders and staff ensure that all groups of pupils have the opportunity to take on positions of responsibility.
- The breakfast club provides a calm and nurturing start to the school day. Pupils enjoy a healthy breakfast and time to sit and chat with their friends. Staff know pupils extremely well and are alert to their needs. They spend time talking to pupils and make sure that pupils know where to find them during the day if they need support.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance is now in line with the national average. The number of pupils who are regularly absent is reducing. The school has clear systems in place to promote good attendance and key members of staff have well-defined roles in relation to following up absence. The school has put in place a good range of initiatives to improve attendance, such as breakfast club, and these are proving successful.
- Pupils are positive and they respond well to praise. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Pupils say good morning to adults and they hold doors open.
- The vast majority of pupils know how to conduct themselves. They are calm and walk sensibly around the school. Most pupils cooperate well with each other during lessons and at breaktimes. On the whole, pupils respond promptly to adults' instructions.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the different types of bullying. Pupils say that when bullying does occur, staff deal with it swiftly and effectively. This view is also held by the majority of parents, who feel that staff deal with behaviour issues promptly.
- Staff benefit from training to develop their skills when supporting pupils who have difficulty managing their emotions and behaviour. As a result, staff provide effective support for these pupils. The number of behaviour incidents and fixed-term exclusions has reduced. Leaders use exclusion appropriately and only as a last resort.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, pupils made weak progress in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2. As a result, levels of attainment in these curriculum areas were below what is usual for pupils nationally. In 2018, outcomes had declined further and the school was in the bottom 20% of all schools nationally for progress in reading and mathematics across key stage 2.
- In 2017 and 2018, pupils made secure progress in writing across key stage 2.
- In 2018, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 rose to be in line with national averages. This was the case for pupils working at the expected standard and for those working at greater depth.
- The school's assessment information and work in books show that pupils' progress is improving in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. Noticeably, pupils read with fluency and confidence and they have an age-appropriate understanding of what they read. However, as teachers do not use assessment information accurately to plan work which matches pupils' needs and abilities, rates of progress are inconsistent across year groups in writing and mathematics.
- There has been a three-year upward trend in the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national Year 1 phonics screening check. In 2018, the proportion of pupils reaching the age-related standard in phonics was above the national average. Pupils use their phonic skills to decode unfamiliar words and to spell with increasing accuracy.
- In 2017 and 2018, disadvantaged pupils made weak progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. Currently, gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing in these subjects. However, gaps remain in almost all year

groups. In a small number of year groups and subjects they have widened. In writing, there are notable gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in almost all year groups.

- In 2018, boys' attainment was below that of girls in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. Also, in the same year, boys' attainment was below that of girls in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2. For current pupils, boys' attainment continues to be below that of girls in writing and mathematics in key stage 1, and below that of girls in reading and writing in key stage 2.
- School assessment information and work in books indicate that current pupils with SEND make good progress from their starting points. This is because they benefit from the support they receive in class, which promotes their level of independence.
- There is evidence in books that pupils' literacy skills are being reinforced in other areas of the curriculum, such as history. This is having a positive impact on standards, particularly in writing.
- Work in science books shows that there is not appropriate coverage of the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not acquiring the skills and knowledge required to make good progress in this subject.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter early years with skills and abilities slightly below those typical for their age. The proportion of children leaving the early years having achieved a good level of development is in line with the national average. Assessment information provided by the school and work in children's books indicate that children make steady progress in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Children are calm, happy and settled in the early years. Positive relationships between children and staff are evident and there is a strong sense of nurture and personal care. Children are confident to share their ideas with school staff and visitors because their ideas are valued.
- Teachers do not use assessment information to plan work that matches children's needs closely enough. Sometimes work is often too difficult for the least able children or too easy for the most able children. As a result, children do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Staff use questioning to encourage children to talk about their ideas and deepen their understanding. This supports the development of key skills and embeds positive learning behaviours.
- Staff plan interesting activities that engage children. As a result, children are keen to learn and concentrate for sustained periods of time. For example, in Reception, a group of children were engrossed in using their phonic skills to read words and match them to the appropriate picture. They glowed with pride when they got the answer correct.
- The learning environment is welcoming, stimulating and colourful. The indoor and outdoor learning environments support learning and appropriate resources are available.
- Leaders and teachers have formed strong relationships with external agencies. Along

with an effective transition process, this enables children to transfer smoothly into school from home and other settings.

- Links with parents are strong and parents value this immensely. The school has established good links with families, which in turn is having a positive impact on children's learning. Parents are fully supported to play a part in their children's development.
- Safeguarding arrangements in early years are effective. Children feel safe and secure. All staff follow safeguarding procedures with the same rigour as the rest of the school. Welfare requirements in the early years are met.

School details

Unique reference number	124205
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10088484

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Wilson
Headteacher	Joanne Banks
Telephone number	01785 337340
Website	http://www.flashley.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@flashley.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 March 2017

Information about this school

- Flash Ley Primary is an average-sized primary school.
- The school has a Nursery providing part-time morning and afternoon places.
- Flash Ley Voyage operates on the school site, providing a range of pre-school and wrap-around care. This provision is registered and inspected separately to the school.
- Pupils are predominantly from a White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is average.
- The school has a breakfast club. This provision is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other key leaders. The lead inspector spoke with three members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector discussed the school with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. Some of these visits were with the headteacher.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books from different subjects. This was carried out during visits to classrooms and through a formal work scrutiny of pupils' books.
- The inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally. A group of pupils met with an inspector to discuss a range of issues. Another group of pupils accompanied an inspector on a walk around the school. A number of pupils read to the lead inspector. The inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors, in the hall at lunchtime and outside on the playground.
- One inspector visited the breakfast club.
- Two inspectors talked to parents before school. The lead inspector also considered the 23 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The lead inspector considered the 27 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, records of monitoring and minutes of governing body meetings. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety was also analysed and discussed with a number of leaders.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and the lead inspector looked at published information on the school website.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Claire Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector
Amarjit Cheema	Ofsted Inspector

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