

Jerome Primary School

Hussey Road, Norton Canes, Cannock, WS11 9TP

Inspection dates 11–12 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- After a period of staffing changes, good teaching has been secured with much outstanding practice, especially in the Reception class and upper Key Stage 2.
- Teachers track and monitor pupils' progress effectively. Consequently, all groups of pupils know their targets and most achieve well over time in relation to their starting points.
- The schools' distinctive approach to developing pupils' social, communication, enterprise and leadership skills strongly promotes pupils' good behaviour, attendance and enjoyment of school.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects, and particularly their problem-solving and communication skills.
- Rigorous monitoring of teachers' performance is well established and has brought good improvement in teaching and pupils' progress since the last inspection.
- Pupils feel safe at school and learn how to keep safe.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although continuing to improve, pupils' progress in English at Key Stage 1 is not yet as rapid as it is in Key Stage 2, especially for the most able.
- Some lessons do not always fully challenge pupils or encourage them to think for themselves.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to review and evaluate their learning in relation to their targets. As a result, they do not always know how well they are doing or their next steps for higher achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, of which eight were jointly observed with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and observed learning assistants working with small groups. They looked at a wide sample of work completed by pupils. They also heard pupils reading.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, and a range of middle and senior leaders. They took note of 17 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school planning, monitoring and evaluation documentation, including the school's own data and analysis of pupils' progress since starting the school, and records relating to behaviour, attendance, performance management information, and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), letters from parents, as well as the responses to parental questionnaires provided by the school. They also met with parents.

Inspection team

Paul Delbridge-Smith, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Jerome is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- Nearly all pupils come from White British families. A few come from a range of minority ethnic heritages and only a small number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for whom the school received additional income (the pupil premium) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs, including those supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- Privately run before- and after-school clubs operate on the school site and are inspected separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' achievement in English at Key Stage 1 by:
 - developing more creative writing opportunities, particularly for more able pupils
 - ensuring the accurate and continuous assessment of pupils' progress in English lessons is used by teachers and middle leaders to set more challenging and aspirational targets for extending pupils' literacy skills.
- Enthuse and engage pupils fully in their learning by:
 - ensuring that pupils take a greater role in setting and reviewing their learning targets, and in assessing and evaluating their own and each other's work
 - ensuring all other adults working with pupils in their learning provide sufficient challenge to enable all pupils to consistently think and learn for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- School and national assessment tests, pupils' work and observations of pupils currently in lessons, show that pupils achieve well across the school and in all subjects. This is clearly evident in pupils' increasingly above-average attainment by the time they leave the school and, in particular, in their sustained above-average skills in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. This means that they leave Key Stage 2 with skills and abilities up to six months ahead of the national average.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that vary but are usually below or in line with those expected for their age. As a result of consistently good or better teaching, they make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially in language and social development, and leave this phase of their education with skills and abilities above those expected for their age.
- Observations of pupils' learning in lessons in Key Stage 1 revealed convincing evidence that pupils' progress has accelerated over the past two years and is now good. This is particularly seen in reading and writing. It is a positive response to the whole-school focus on adopting a curriculum which promotes creative thinking and learning. Although improving, progress in Key Stage 1 is not as rapid as in Key Stage 2. This is because more able pupils, in particular, do not make consistently good progress in English in Key Stage 1. These pupils are not always set challenging enough targets and they do not have enough opportunities for creative writing.
- In all year groups, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics relative to their starting points. Careful monitoring and tracking of their progress by teachers and leaders mean that these pupils benefit from effective support and intervention programmes throughout their time at school.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress, particularly in mathematics and reading, so that they are very well prepared for their next stage of education when they leave at the end of Year 6. Pupils demonstrate high levels of social, communication and leadership skills such that they are highly confident and articulate in expressing their enjoyment of their learning with each other. They particularly enjoy reading and problem solving, and are actively encouraged and supported at every opportunity to develop and run many mini-enterprise projects for the benefit of the community, which they do with great success.
- Although, increasingly, more pupils are making progress that exceeds national expectations at Key Stage 2, progress in Key Stage 1 is not quite as rapid because some of the literacy teaching does not provide opportunities for pupils to build on what they already know, or challenge more-able pupils to work and achieve at higher levels.
- The school uses the pupil premium effectively to support the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals through the use of skilled teaching assistants, and, as a result, those pupils make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good and often outstanding teaching over time reflects a systematic drive by leaders and managers since the previous inspection to continuously improve pupils' achievement at school. Comments provided to inspectors from a small number of parents and carers indicated their

concerns relating to teaching over the past two or three years when there was a high degree of staff change and some weak teaching. These issues have now been resolved successfully.

- The vast majority of teaching observed was at least good. It was outstanding in Reception and in most of Key Stage 2 classes. In the most effective lessons, teachers, teaching assistants and other classroom helpers were highly skilled at facilitating pupils' learning and development as a result of well-constructed learning plans and activities which were tailored to meet pupils' individual needs and abilities. In a Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, pupils worked independently and in groups to develop their writing, reading and oral communication skills. Some developed convincing presentations for and against a variety of different social and moral dilemmas, whilst a group of more able pupils were challenged to read parts of a story with and without expression, fluency and intonation in order to demonstrate the difference to other pupils who had less well developed skills.
- Pupils thrive when they self-direct and lead their own learning, as well as that of others, to demonstrate their highly developed social and communication skills. For example, a pupil took the role of teacher in a Year 1 literacy lesson to lead a letters and sounds (phonics) learning game, using the interactive whiteboard for other pupils to identify sense and nonsense words, while other pupils were developing their writing skills using a variety of creative resources. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils worked together to construct a human-sized frequency chart to consider data averages and distribution before writing their hypotheses.
- Teaching makes a significant contribution to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was exemplified particularly well when pupils in Year 3 shared their knowledge about the Aztecs, leading to further peer enquiry and reflection about cultural differences.
- On a few occasions, in Key Stage 1, teachers' questioning did not always take account of pupils' different abilities, particularly the more able, resulting in these pupils making slower progress. Additionally, some teaching assistants and classroom helpers did not always allow pupils to think for themselves and, at times, overly directed the learning of less-able pupils.
- Teachers' use recorded assessment information effectively and they consistently mark and assess pupils' work in order to plan activities to meet the needs of pupils. However, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to review and evaluate the quality of their work in relation to their targets for improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- As at the time of the previous inspection, behaviour is typically good across the school. Frequently, behaviour is outstanding, particularly when pupils take leadership roles in their learning, as demonstrated in the Reception class and in some Key Stage 2 classes. However, more-able pupils become restless in some Key Stage 1 English lessons when they are not challenged enough.
 - Pupils demonstrate they are keen to learn and they try their hardest in lessons. As a result of their highly developed social, moral and communications skills, they can be trusted to work independently as well as in teams. Many pupils set up and run their own mini-enterprises to raise funds for local charities and to contribute to school improvements. Pupils take every opportunity to lead and manage their behaviour as well as that of others.
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- Pupils interviewed say they enjoy school and feel safe at all times. This is a view shared by the very large majority of parents and carers who used Parent View and all staff who returned an inspection questionnaire. Pupils have a well-developed understanding about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and say bullying is rare. They know how to respond if there is any threat of bullying, and are confident that members of staff will help them if they have any concerns.
- All staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively, as evidenced at the highly successful Harvest Festival, attended by many parents and members of the local community, at the local church during the inspection,.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding about different groups within society and the importance of respect, tolerance and diversity, evidenced by the relationships they build with pupils from other cultures in other schools.
- There have been no exclusions over the past year, and pupils' attendance is typically above average, reflecting the diligence of staff in encouraging good attendance of all groups of pupils.

The leadership and management are good

- The substantial improvement since the last inspection has been driven by a staff team that has worked in unison with the governing body and parents under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. Leaders have an accurate awareness of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. These are reflected in detailed development plans, rigorous self-evaluation and the effective use of performance management to continually develop teaching and leadership. As a result, most pupils achieve well.
- Leaders have successfully eradicated weak teaching since the previous inspection. This has been most successfully achieved at Key Stage 2, where most teaching observed was outstanding.
- There are generally good systems for tracking and monitoring the rate of pupils' progress throughout the school but, until recently, these have focused on termly achievement and have not always facilitated the setting of challenging targets for more able pupils.
- A broad and balanced curriculum meets the needs of the great majority of pupils. The school's approach to embedding a creative curriculum, philosophy for children, and the development of pupils' enterprise and leadership skills promote pupils' good achievement and enthusiasm for learning.
- The school has strong partnerships with parents and with other organisations to enrich pupils' learning and development. Parents are very supportive of the school. Many regularly volunteer in classes and attend opportunities provided by the school to learn about latest teaching methods. A successful example of this is the distribution of a leading practice 'phonics learning' CD-ROM to all parents, which was produced by the headteacher with the support of the local authority.
- The local authority provides effective light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - sets demanding targets for the school to continually raise pupils' achievements
 - supports the headteacher in strategic planning and is now much more involved in contributing

to the quest for the continuous improvement of the school

- is aware of the need to extend its involvement in the monitoring of the role of leaders and managers, as well as the need for the school to set more challenging targets for more able pupils.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	124175
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	406218

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Brothwell
Headteacher	Rachel Hawkins
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2010
Telephone number	01543 278595
Fax number	01543 278595
Email address	office@jerome-primary.org

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