

St Stephen's Primary School

Church Lane, Fradley, Lichfield, WS13 8NL

Inspection dates 19–20 March 2013

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.

- Good leadership and management, including that of the governing body, have secured the school's good improvement since its last inspection. Leaders are capable of improving the school even further.
- Achievement is good. The progress of all groups of pupils is good at all stages of the school.
- Standards in English and mathematics have risen since the previous inspection and pupils are working at levels higher than those typical for their age.
- Most teaching is either good or outstanding. Teachers make lessons very interesting and mostly set demanding tasks that interest pupils and move them on quickly.
- Behaviour is good and teachers manage it effectively. Pupils are interested and keen to learn. They are safe in school.
- Leaders at all levels set high expectations for all staff and pupils. They check thoroughly the progress towards meeting challenging targets and so teaching and pupils' achievement have improved.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and not all groups of pupils make excellent progress.
- Outstanding classroom practice by both teachers and teaching assistants is not sufficiently shared among staff.
- Marking does not always clearly inform pupils about how they can improve their work.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to set work that is demanding enough for pupils capable of doing harder work or for them to contribute to their own learning.
- Pupils do not have a clear enough idea of the different cultures that make up modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- Nine teachers were observed teaching. Of the 10 full lessons seen, four were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and talked with pupils about their work. Pupils from Year 2 read their books to inspectors and talked about reading.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher, the senior leadership team and staff with specific responsibilities. The lead inspector had a phone call with a representative of the local authority. An inspector met with a group of pupils and inspectors held informal discussions with pupils throughout the inspection.
- The inspection team took account of 61 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and a letter sent to inspectors by a parent.
- Questionnaire responses from 14 members of staff were analysed.
- A range of school documents were scrutinised, including policies for safeguarding, the school's self-evaluation documents and improvement plans, results of the school's monitoring of teaching, tracking of pupils' progress and lesson planning.
- Inspectors examined records of behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Calvert

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils receiving additional funding through the pupil premium (those known to be eligible for free school meals, children of forces families or in local authority care) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is about average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding to increase further the pace of learning for all groups by:
 - ensuring pupils capable of doing harder work have tasks set that are hard enough to help them achieve their full potential
 - giving pupils more opportunities to take some responsibility for their own learning
 - making sure that marking is consistent from class to class and across different subjects in helping pupils improve their work
 - sharing amongst all staff the excellent teaching already in school so that all staff are aware of what makes teaching outstanding.
- Improve pupils' understanding of diversity in modern British life.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with knowledge and skills which are typical for children of their ages. They make good progress in the Reception class in developing secure skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and in their social and emotional development. They are prepared well for learning in Year 1 and beyond.
- Pupils' achieve well at Key Stage 1 and this has improved since the last inspection. Good progress in reading, writing and mathematics means that by the end of Year 2 attainment is now above the national average. Pupils in Year 2 wrote good quality introductions to their stories, in which they used interesting words and well-punctuated sentences. Pupils are currently making rapid progress and are between one and two terms ahead of where they are expected to be for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Results from national tests in Year 1 to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) are well above the national average due to good and better teaching by staff skilled at teaching reading. Pupils use their learning well to read tricky words. They talk about what they have read with understanding. Older pupils read widely and enjoy reading.
- Records checking pupils' progress show that almost all pupils make the progress they should make from year to year in English and mathematics, with some making more progress than this. Results in 2012 showed an improvement over 2011 in the percentages making at least expected progress. Pupils in Years 2 to 5 are making good and sometimes excellent progress in reading and mathematics to put them between two terms to a year ahead. In writing, progress is good and pupils are just over a term ahead of where they are nationally expected to be for their age. Higher attaining pupils occasionally do not reach their full potential.
- Pupils in Year 6 make good progress and, from an average starting point at the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils are on track to achieve standards above the national average. Their work books show they write accurately for a wide range of different purposes and in different styles. They are skilled at turning their own play scripts into well punctuated prose, using expressive words to add interest to their writing. Pupils are good at solving problems in mathematics, effectively applying their numeracy skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational make good progress because work and learning methods are matched closely to their individual needs. They receive good support in class by teachers and teaching assistants alike. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are proficient in using English, access the full curriculum and make good progress.
- Those supported through pupil premium funding also make good progress in English and mathematics. The school is successfully closing the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils in the school. These pupils are now approximately two terms behind their peers in writing and mathematics and in line with them in reading.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lesson observations, records of pupils' improving progress and the school's checks on teaching show that teaching has improved since the last inspection. Any inadequate teaching has been eradicated and the increased proportion of good and outstanding teaching comes from teachers

having high expectations, using assessment information well to match work to pupils' needs and moving learning on at a much quicker pace.

- Teachers make lessons interesting, because they use assessment information well to make work demanding for pupils at all levels and this creates a climate in which pupils try hard and are motivated to do their very best. In a highly effective mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were constantly given tasks that made them think and work things out for themselves. This encouraged them to initiate moving onto more difficult tasks for themselves, a move which made learning highly effective and gave pupils a thirst for learning. This is not typical of all lessons, though; sometimes opportunities are missed to make sure pupils who are capable of doing harder work are challenged sufficiently and given opportunities to take some initiative in moving their own learning on.
- Outstanding teaching has exceptionally well-planned lessons that are highly organised so that all pupils learn at a rapid pace. Pupils are fully involved in learning, are constantly challenged and are encouraged to follow their own lines of enquiry. Teachers and teaching assistants work exceptionally well together, supporting pupils wherever necessary. They constantly assess pupils' progress and adjust their teaching accordingly. Behaviour is managed through the engagement of pupils in challenging activities and a rapid pace of learning. These are characteristics of teaching which could usefully be used as examples to help raise the quality of teaching and learning even further by helping all teachers understand features of outstanding teaching.
- Marking of pupils' work is helpful but it is not consistent across the school in giving them good advice for improvement. Pupils' books show that the advice given by teachers in their marking is usually followed up by pupils.
- Teaching in English is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils across the school are given ample opportunity to talk to and discuss with other pupils. This effectively helps them develop good speaking skills, which in turn helps their writing. Reading is taught well from a young age and pupils of all ages are encouraged effectively to read for pleasure.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding make good progress through timely identification of their specific needs, matching work accurately to each pupil's prior learning and providing effective support, usually by a competent teaching assistant, so they can move on to the next steps with confidence.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and approach their interesting learning tasks with enthusiasm. Pupils speak well about behaviour in school. Behaviour is good and pupils are eager to start their tasks.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are happy in school. They know about different forms of bullying, but pupils say it very rarely happens and any instances are dealt with quickly and effectively. Attendance is above average. Virtually all parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire say their children are happy, safe and well looked after, and that behaviour is good.
- A strong feature of the school is the sensitive personal support which is provided for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils who find it difficult to settle into school life are supported sensitively and disruption to learning is rare. There have been no cases of pupils

not being allowed to come to school because of poor behaviour.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness is developed well. The school's organisation into houses and opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility, including playground buddies, lunchtime helpers, team point monitors, assembly monitors and the school council, ensure that pupils develop good social awareness. Pupils work well together, respecting others' views and showing courtesy. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and generally make good choices. In lessons and assemblies, there are good opportunities for pupils to think and reflect. Their understanding of the different cultures that make up modern Britain is limited.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership has led to a good level of improvement in important areas of the school's work. A determined drive to respond to the recommendations of the school's last inspection has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and standards.
- Rigorous arrangements for checking teaching have helped improve teaching. Almost all teaching seen during the inspection was good or outstanding. Senior leaders visit classrooms regularly to monitor lessons, look at teachers' planning and check pupils' work to ensure they are making good or better progress. Any areas identified for improvement are tackled quickly and to good effect. Senior leaders provide good opportunities for teachers to develop their expertise through appropriate training. Leaders are aware of the need to ensure that all teaching is of the best quality and plan to share the expertise already in the school.
- Teachers have clear targets set for their performance. These are linked to the school's improvement priorities. Senior leaders hold class teachers accountable for their pupils' progress at regular intervals. Most teachers are near the top of their pay scales so governors have made it clear that they expect a quality of teaching and a level of responsibility that justify their pay.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and based on secure evidence from lesson observations, a rigorous analysis of data on pupils' attainment and progress, and information gained from pupils' work. This detailed view links very well into school development planning, which accurately identifies what needs to be done, how targets will be reached and how success will be measured.
- Pupil premium income is allocated appropriately. This can be seen in the good progress eligible pupils make. This year, funding is targeted in a similar way as the previous year, to support continued good progress and the inclusion of qualifying pupils in school visits and clubs.
- The curriculum supports well the development of core skills, such as writing. Senior and subject leaders made wise decisions regarding curriculum development. A decision to bring writing in subjects such as English, science, religious education, history and geography together into one book has helped pupils appreciate the purpose of learning and has had a positive impact on standards in writing. The school has a strong personal, social and health education programme that makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, their behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The local authority has an accurate view of the overall effectiveness of the school and has upgraded the school to one requiring minimal intervention. It supports the school well through evaluation visits and written reports.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has worked well with the headteacher in tackling issues raised at the school's last inspection. They reformed after the last inspection and have become very challenging in their expectations and target setting, yet supportive to the headteacher in making difficult decisions and carrying out resulting actions. Governors visit the school frequently to gain first-hand knowledge of its work. They understand assessment data thoroughly and know how well the school is performing compared to other schools. Governors are very clear about the degree and pace of improvement they expect. They have good levels of relevant expertise which they use to good effect. They challenge senior leaders on school improvement and set clear targets in managing the performance of all staff, making sure that teachers' pay is linked to competence. As a result, governors have an accurate knowledge of the quality of teaching and its impact. They ensure statutory requirements are met, including for safeguarding. They make careful financial decisions, ensuring that funding from the pupil premium is used well in supporting those pupils who qualify.

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	124084
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	402226

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Haywood
Headteacher	Robert Davies
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2009
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