

St James's CofE Primary School

Kingsway, Wollaston, Stourbridge, DY8 4RU

Inspection dates

22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Progress of pupils in mathematics has risen sharply since the last inspection and is now good. Pupils make good progress in reading and writing.
- Children in the Reception classes make a good start to school. They become increasingly independent and develop a good understanding of the sounds that letters make which helps their reading.
- In most lessons teachers plan interesting activities that motivate and engage pupils.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They enjoy the good range of responsibilities on offer and participate in a wide range of sporting and other after-school activities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding very effectively. Pupils display positive attitudes to learning and persevere when challenged.
- School leaders have improved teaching in mathematics. They have successfully accelerated the progress made by pupils supported by pupil premium funding.
- Senior leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching and the progress made by all groups of pupils.
- Leaders engage extremely well with parents. The school is a welcoming and caring place where pupils feel safe.
- Governors are well informed and challenge the school to continually improve its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good not enough is outstanding and the best practice is not always shared.
- In a few lessons pupils make less rapid progress because they are not given enough chances to think hard and achieve at the highest level.
- Although progress in writing is good, pupils are not always given the support they need to spell accurately. Some teachers need to better highlight key spelling mistakes for pupils in their work.
- In a few lessons the tasks given to pupils to complete in lessons sometimes fail to motivate and interest them in learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 16 lessons and made a number of shorter visits to lessons. They spoke with pupils at lunch and break times, and held meetings with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including policies for keeping pupils safe, school self-evaluation and improvement planning. They also examined work in pupils' exercise books and a range of data about their achievement.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other school staff, four members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 91 parents were analysed through the Parent View website. In addition the views of a parent who wrote to the inspectors were considered. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in questionnaires returned by 41 members of staff.

Inspection team

Ian Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mike Appleby

Additional Inspector

Alison Lamputt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are both well below the level seen nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average overall, although a higher than average proportion is supported at school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below the national average. This funding supports those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, any in the care of the local authority, and pupils who have a parent serving in the armed services.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to raise achievement further by:
 - managing learning in lessons effectively by adjusting tasks to maintain a good rate of progress
 - enthusing pupils in their desire to learn by consistently providing well-planned and stimulating activities
 - enhance standards of marking so that it is consistently effective across all classes and subjects
 - sharing the outstanding practice that exists in the school.
- Enhance the quality of writing by providing high-quality support for pupils with timely and frequent opportunities to correct their spellings.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter Reception with skills typical for their age, although a small number enter with skills below those typically found, particularly in communication. They make good progress in Reception, through a good range of activities led by adults or those that they choose for themselves. As a result, the majority reach or exceed the expected level by the time they enter Year 1.
- Overall, pupils reach above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 last year showed that the proportions of pupils making and exceeding the nationally expected rates of progress were higher than seen nationally.
- Higher-attaining pupils have made rapid progress in reading and mathematics since the previous inspection.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' progress in mathematics has accelerated and is now good throughout the school. In 2013 the majority of pupils reached above average attainment in mathematics.
- Pupils also make good progress in writing, although achievement in spelling is less positive than it should be because in some lessons teachers do not pick up on mistakes quickly enough. Pupils do well in reading. They read widely and often and attain standards that are above average.
- Last year improvements in teaching enabled pupils eligible for the pupil premium to make faster progress than their classmates in Year 6 in mathematics, reading and writing. In mathematics and writing they were less than one term behind their peers, whereas in reading the gap in attainment has closed due to the school's highly effective support.
- In most lessons pupils make at least good progress because work is well-matched to their learning needs. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from this and make good progress accordingly.
- Pupils enjoy success in a broad range of subjects. Music is important to the school's success and all pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils benefit from the use of the new primary sport funding which is used to provide additional coaching in gymnastics, dance and other physical activities. Many pupils participate in these and other additional activities which help promote their wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.
- Girls and boys make good progress throughout the school. The school has recognised that some boys do not achieve so well in writing and has successfully supported them in writing for different purposes, creatively and at length.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers create a positive climate for learning. Pupils enjoy positive working relationships with their teachers and their achievements are celebrated in the colourful displays around the school.

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is good. Lessons are frequently well-planned and teachers use up-to-date assessment information to carefully match activities to the needs of their pupils. However, there are occasions when tasks are not sufficiently modified as the lesson progresses to build on pupils' knowledge and introduce new skills. As a result, this hampers some pupils' rapid progress.
- Mathematics is effectively taught throughout the school. In a lesson on co-ordinates in Year 3, the teacher ensured that pupils made outstanding progress by applying her excellent subject knowledge to thoughtful planning, challenging questioning and well-prepared activities.
- Early reading is particularly well taught in the Reception class. Adults successfully develop the children's knowledge of the sounds that letters make through a range of activities that maintain the children's concentration and interest.
- Where teaching is at its best, lessons are challenging and stimulating for pupils and teachers' use their high motivation to inspire outstanding progress. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson on biographical writing, the very effective use of various stimuli and a high level of challenge ensured that pupils were able to produce high-quality biographies of their own. In addition, their behaviour and attitudes to learning in this lesson were outstanding because the teacher used incisive questioning to probe and deepen their understanding. She praised and motivated pupils well, giving them lots of opportunities to reflect on their learning.
- Less able pupils receive good support from teaching assistants in lessons and from additional lessons to help develop their literacy skills.
- Marking is not used as effectively in all classes as it is in some. In some cases marking makes an excellent contribution to learning because it carefully explains how pupils could improve their work and pupils show their understanding of the teacher's comments by giving examples of this new learning in response. However the impact of effective marking is lost in some cases because pupils are not given time to respond to it. Opportunities to correct mistakes are also missed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they consistently show positive attitudes to school. They enjoy lessons, concentrate well and persevere when set challenging tasks. Lessons are rarely interrupted by inappropriate behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and in consequence attendance is above average.
- Pupils respond promptly to the tasks set in their lessons and are eager to learn, although their focus can wane when tasks are not closely matched to their needs or fail to capture their full interest. Most pupils present their work neatly and carefully, taking great pride in their presentation, although occasionally this is marred by weak spelling.
- Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of bullying and older pupils are aware of the different forms that bullying can take, for example cyber bullying. Incidents of bullying are rare, but when they do occur they are investigated thoroughly. Parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire are very positive about the school's ability to deal with bullying.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils report feeling safe in school and this is strongly echoed by parents and carers.

- Pupils appreciate the extra responsibilities they are given, and say they enjoy playing a role in the running of the school. Pupils make effective and positive contributions to school life through the school council, learning ambassadors, eco warriors, buddies and worship groups. Pupils explain how membership of these groups has helped with their communication and presentation skills, in becoming good leaders and raising their self confidence.
- Pupils welcome the opportunities that they are given to learn to play a musical instrument and to attend sports clubs. They appreciate the visits which they make to places of interest and particularly enjoy residential visits attended by pupils of all ages.

The leadership and management is good

- School leaders have successfully focused on raising achievement since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher fully enjoys the confidence of governors, parents and pupils. She has the enthusiastic support of the staff in delivering the improvements required. As a result the rate of progress has accelerated rapidly in mathematics over the last two years and standards of attainment are rising.
- Senior leaders have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. For example, the need to improve standards of spelling. The school's plans for improvement are well-focused and include an appropriate range of actions to drive further improvement.
- Senior leaders set challenging targets for teachers to ensure that pupils make good progress. Appraisal systems are carried out robustly leading to the provision of additional training as appropriate.
- Senior leaders effectively conduct regular reviews of pupil progress with teachers which have contributed to improvements in learning and progress. Staff with management responsibilities carry out their duties appropriately, and senior leaders have well-conceived plans to enhance their role in these meetings and other aspects of their monitoring work.
- The curriculum is broad and stimulating and has significant strengths in a number of areas including music. Pupils enjoy the strong focus on physical activity and the school has a strategic plan to make effective use of additional sports funding to improve provision further. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed through the well planned curriculum.
- The local authority provides a good level of support. The school adviser has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. Additional support in the form of mathematics consultancy has effectively contributed to the rapid progress seen in this subject since the previous inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and are proud of the school. They keep a close eye on school performance and understand the data available with increasing expertise.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and frequently visit the school. They monitor the work of the school for themselves and compare this alongside evidence supplied by senior leaders. Governors fully understand how performance management operates at school and closely monitors how well teachers' salary progression is tied to their impact on pupils' achievement.
 - Governors keep tabs on pupil premium funds to check that they are being used successfully

to help pupils in danger of falling behind do well.

- Governors ensure that safeguarding meet requirements. Safeguarding is checked to ensure that pupils are as safe as possible and that processes are up-to-date.

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	103851
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	431682

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Millichip
Headteacher	Sally Sixsmith
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2012
Telephone number	01384 818810
Fax number	N/A
Email address	info@st-james.dudley.sch.uk

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