

St John's C of E (C) First School

Whiteoaks Drive, Bishopswood, Stafford, ST19 9AH

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- The strong leadership of the school has ensured that the quality of teaching is good and enables pupils from all groups to make good progress and attain well.
- Standards are above expectations in reading, writing and mathematics, by the time pupils leave for middle school at the end of Year 4.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and this is a particular strength of the school.
- Teachers make sure that lessons are interesting and exciting to engage pupils. They make good use of computer technology to aid pupils' learning.
- The teaching of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) is good and this has led to pupils making a good start in learning to read.
- Children have a positive start in the Reception class and make good progress in all areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage and especially in their personal and social development.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils pay attention in lessons, are respectful of others and are keen to learn. Their attendance is above average.
- Systems to ensure that pupils are kept safe and healthy are rigorous. Pupils say that they are happy and that they feel well looked after.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough of the teaching and learning is consistently outstanding because at times the work that is set is too easy.
- Although pupils' progress in mathematics is good, it is not as strong as it is in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes in six lessons, including two which were shared observations with the headteacher. In addition, pupils were heard reading, pupils spoken to and their work in books was scrutinised jointly with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with a range of people including the headteacher, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority representative.
- The inspection took account of the 48 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as letters from parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included those relating to safeguarding, health and safety, planning and monitoring, records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, documents relating to spending money received for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority), sports funding and the school's own data on pupils' progress.
- Staff questionnaires were not used for this inspection.

Inspection team

Sheelagh Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Saint John's Church of England Controlled First School is much smaller than the average-sized first school.
- Almost all of the pupils are White British and speak English as a first language.
- There are three classes. Reception children are taught in one class, Years 2 and 3 are taught as one class and Years 3 and 4 as another.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes to staffing, including the appointment of the present headteacher in 2008.
- The number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. There are none in some year groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - set work for pupils that is not too easy and make adjustments to their teaching in the light of pupils' responses to it.
- Ensure that pupils' progress in mathematics is as good as that in reading and writing by making sure that:
 - teachers make pupils aware of what they need to do to improve their work
 - pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise mathematical skills such as those around handling data, creating and interpreting graphs or measuring and weighing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to school varies very slightly year-on-year, due to the very small numbers in each year group. However, children start school in Reception with skills and knowledge broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make a good start to their education and achieve well, particularly in their personal and social development. This is because adults are consistent in their expectations of behaviour and so children quickly learn what is and what is not acceptable.
- Throughout the school, pupils from all groups and of all levels of prior attainment, including the more able, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. As a result, standards are above those expected for pupils' ages by the end of Year 4.
- Phonics is taught systematically and to very good effect. In the Year 1 national phonic screening check last year, the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard was well above average. Pupils make good progress in developing early reading skills and enjoyment of books as a result. This also has a positive impact on their writing and spelling skills.
- Currently, the particular focus for improvement in standards identified by leaders is in mathematics. Pupils from all groups are making good progress, although not yet as consistently or strongly as in reading and writing. This is because pupils do not always know what to do to improve their work still further and opportunities for them to practise skills in handling data, creating and interpreting graphs or measuring and weighing are sometimes missed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar good progress to their classmates, as do the very small number of pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. The funding is used well to support individual pupils when the need arises. As a result, they attain similar standards to other pupils and there are no gaps in their attainment.

The quality of teaching is good

- The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. As a result, pupils from all groups make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching is more consistently good in reading and writing, because of the recent focus on developing teaching in these areas of learning.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils eligible for the pupil premium and for disabled pupils or those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils are enabled to make the same good progress as their peers. There is equality of access to all activities because of the support and care of all adults in the school.
- Behaviour management is effective and so time is not lost in lessons. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils know what is expected of them; they listen and pay attention because they are inspired to try their hardest and want to please their teachers.
- Lessons are interesting, because teachers plan carefully, taking consideration of the things that pupils take pleasure in. For example, a geography lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 was based upon a walk that the class had undertaken around the village. Using electronic notepads, they

had taken photographs of various geographical features, which they were then going to plot onto a map. Interest and excitement levels were high, as a result, and good progress was made, especially in learning technical geographical terminology.

- Teachers mark work regularly and give pupils good information on how to improve their writing still further. As a result, pupils can confidently discuss and then put into practice the steps they need to take to raise the quality of their work. This does not always happen to the same degree in mathematics.
- There is a good emphasis on number in mathematics, but on occasion, pupils are required to repeat work they have already completed successfully, rather than being taught new skills. Teachers do not always move pupils on speedily enough to more advanced work and, as a result, although pupils make generally good progress, it is not as consistently so as that in reading and writing. There is too little emphasis on pupils learning how to handle data, create and interpret graphs or to measure and weigh.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk enthusiastically about the things that they particularly like, including science, geography, literacy and using computers. Their attendance is good as a result and this contributes effectively to the good progress they make.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, they talk to their partners and share ideas, when asked to do so. They also swiftly stop to listen to their teacher when she indicates that she wants their attention.
- Parents and carers express mainly positive views about the school. The very large majority say that they believe that their child is happy, safe, well looked after and that behaviour is good.
- Some parents were unsure about how effectively the school responds to bullying, a minority feel it is well dealt with and a smaller number feel it is not; around a third say they do not know. Pupils, however, say that they feel safe in school and that incidents are 'very rare'. They say that they do fall out on occasion, but that they are secure in knowing what to do should bullying occur.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because some pupils lose concentration, on occasion, and need to be reminded to pay attention.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils show a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when using the internet and computers. They value school visits, such as to the local church and feel that teachers take care to look after them at these times.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders work diligently to enable pupils to attain above average standards and this is achieved through an accurate view of the school's effectiveness, linked to clear-sighted planning.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because regular accurate assessments are made of what children know and can do and activities are carefully planned which build skills and knowledge steadily. Children have a good start to their school careers as a result.

- Managers enable all staff to work effectively together, despite the many recent changes. Carefully planned spending on resources and a high emphasis on staff training enable aims to be achieved, as is seen in the high numbers of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics checks.
- Parents hold mainly positive opinions of school and its work. The large majority of those who responded would recommend this school to others. A very large majority say that their children are happy, safe and well looked after. They say that behaviour is good and appropriate homework is given.
- The range of learning experiences that are provided for children is wide and includes opportunities to take part in a good range of sporting and cultural activities. The spending of the sports funding has been largely targeted at increasing sporting opportunities and building teachers' confidence in teaching gymnastics. The remainder, which is still held by the local authority, is planned to be used for swimming for pupils in Key Stage 2 during the summer term.
- Lessons are supplemented by after-school activities. A particularly popular example is tap dancing, which is well attended. The full impact of these additional activities on pupils' physical education, health and well-being are too recent to be accurately evaluated.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. The aims and values of the school are woven into everyday practice. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and to gain a real sense of their own achievements. An area that is particularly valued by pupils is the 'Peaceful place', where they can go to think or pray.
- Because of the judgements of the previous inspection report and the interim letter, and the good attainment of pupils, the local authority has provided a 'light touch' in its support for the school. It has, however, provided good support and training for teachers and governors, which has benefited all concerned.
- The opportunities for training and working with another local school have enabled teachers to develop their skills effectively. Leaders of subjects benefit from sharing expertise with other schools. Leaders' capacity to bring about improvement is shown in pupils' good achievement and the way that new teachers are helped to settle into the school and become effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They visit regularly and actively seek out information on how well the school is doing. They have confidence and expertise with which to question and challenge the headteacher, gained from training, such as that to interpret school performance data. They also provide the school with great support. They are aware of the quality of teaching and have taken positive decisions, with regard to financial management, so that this good quality will be able to be maintained. The performance of staff is evaluated in relation to pupils' progress and appropriately rewarded. Governors carry out their responsibilities well and ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	124236
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	441267

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Thompson
Headteacher	Heather Lane
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
Telephone number	01785 840318
Fax number	01785 840318
Email address	office@st-johns-bishopswood.staffs.sch.uk

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