

Smith's Wood Community Primary School

Kingfisher Drive, Smith's Wood, Birmingham, B36 0SZ

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics in this rapidly improving school because they are taught well.
- Good and sometimes outstanding teaching has contributed to the rise in attainment, especially in writing.
- Teachers and other adults are particularly good at helping pupils who are in danger of falling behind. Some of the help given is of excellent quality.
- The way in which the school teaches younger pupils phonics (the sounds that letters make) is outstanding.
- Adults and pupils get along well together and these strong relationships help pupils to make good progress because they want to do their best.
- Pupils feel safe and are proud of their school. They behave well and enjoy their work very much. They appreciate the help they are given to develop into mature individuals.
- Some pupils do well in sport because they receive high quality specialist teaching.
- Staff have successfully created a positive, caring place for learning. Pupils know they are valued and cared about.
- The key to the success of this school lies in the inspirational leadership of the headteacher.
- Senior leaders work together very effectively as a team and have played a major part in raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching.
- The governors provide good-quality support. They are not afraid to challenge in order to bring about further improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Sometimes teachers do not demand enough of the most-able pupils or let pupils know how to improve when they mark their work.
- Not enough pupils reach higher levels in mathematics in Key Stage 2 because they lack the skills needed to reach these levels.
- Too few pupils reach higher levels in reading in Key Stages 1 and 2 because, in the past, they did not receive the same high-quality teaching of early reading skills that younger pupils do now, and some are still catching up lost ground.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff, including senior and subject leaders. There was also a meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also looked at the school's own parental questionnaires and spoke informally to parents and carers.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, policies, data about pupils' progress and attainment, and how the school sets targets for the teachers to improve their work. They also looked at child protection and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Kath Campbell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steven Goldsmith

Additional Inspector

Stuart Ransom

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Smith's Wood is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language.
- A high proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and those with a parent in the armed forces.
- An above-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school provides care for pupils before and after school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics in Key Stage 2 and in reading throughout the school by making sure that:
 - pupils build up their basic numeracy skills as they move through the school so that they are not held back by simple calculations when trying to solve problems
 - boys and girls, particularly the most-able, become confident readers right from the start so that they are able to develop the advanced reading skills they need to reach higher levels by the time they leave.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that teachers:
 - share and learn from the outstanding practice that exists within the school
 - have the highest expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve
 - use marking consistently well to let pupils know how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Nursery with low levels of skills, knowledge and understanding. Despite making good progress in the development of early literacy, numeracy and social skills, many do not reach the expected levels of understanding for their age by the time they move into Year 1.
- Since 2011, attainment has risen year-on-year in both key stages. In 2013, attainment reached average levels overall, with attainment in writing slightly above average. This upward trend in attainment has been sustained in pupils' current work. The proportion of pupils making better than expected progress continues to rise throughout the school. The reasons for this improvement are better teaching and thorough, regular tracking of pupils' progress. Underachievement is quickly identified and support put in place to get pupils back on track.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is currently good. The school recently changed the way in which it teaches letters and sounds (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and this has had a major impact on younger pupils' attainment. Phonics teaching is an integral part of daily routines and, in 2013, a high proportion of pupils in Year 1 reached the expected level in the phonics screening check. By contrast, some pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and throughout Key Stage 2 who did not receive such structured teaching sometimes struggle to work out simple unfamiliar words. Many are still catching up lost ground and lack the more advanced skills they need to reach the higher levels.
- The rise in pupils' attainment in writing throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 2 in 2013, was a major success for the school. As with reading, the changes to the ways in which writing skills are taught have been very effective. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is increasing in both key stages and pupils are beginning to produce good-quality written work in a range of different subjects.
- Raising attainment in mathematics has been a whole-school area for development. Children join Year 1 with weak mathematical skills. In 2013, despite making good progress, too few pupils in Year 2 reached higher levels because this group had particularly low starting points. Currently, younger pupils develop skills in a more systematic way and a greater proportion of pupils in Key Stage 1 are working at higher levels.
- In Key Stage 2, there is still some way to go before the most-able pupils reach the levels of which they are capable in mathematics. Many of these pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Despite making accelerated progress in Year 6 through teaching of the highest quality, some lack the mature mathematical thinking required to reach the higher levels.
- The school has been very successful at closing the gap between its least able pupils and the rest. The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is meticulously monitored. Many of the programmes for individual pupils are of outstanding quality and help these pupils to achieve well. Some make excellent progress.
- The school has used its pupil premium funding very effectively to improve older pupils' basic skills. In 2013, although these pupils were working a term behind other pupils in mathematics, the gap had closed completely in reading. In writing, these pupils were performing better than other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Better teaching is an important part of this school's success. Nearly all the teaching seen during the inspection was of at least good quality, with some that was outstanding.
- Classrooms are lively, exciting places where teachers present activities in interesting ways. Relationships between adults and pupils are particularly strong and contribute greatly to good learning. Pupils want to succeed because they enjoy what they are doing.
- The good ratio of adults to pupils makes a strong contribution to good learning because pupils get the support they need. The work of the adults who support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is of high quality. These pupils are given just the right level of support to help them gain the confidence to achieve well.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults work together well as a team and focus right from the start on developing children's early language, literacy and numeracy skills. They provide children with a wealth of rewarding experiences in an attractive indoor and outdoor learning environment.
- In lessons where teachers expect the best from pupils, the rate of progress is very rapid. A good example of this was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, where pupils were trying to find the most efficient ways of solving problems. Although some pupils struggled with simple calculations, the teacher moved learning along at a fast pace through skilful questioning. Individual pupils who might have been held back by their lack of calculation skills were supported well so that they were able to enjoy quick success.
- This level of challenge is not there in all lessons. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations, particularly in what they demand of their most-able pupils. Sometimes work is too easy and these pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Occasionally, additional activities provided by the teacher are not always completed by pupils or followed up by the teacher to check if they are correct.
- The quality of marking has improved since the previous inspection but there are still inconsistencies. While some teachers guide pupils to the next steps in their learning, others do not. Pupils do not always know what they need to do to reach the next level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes towards learning are very positive and contribute greatly to their good personal development.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn to share and wait their turn. They enjoy the activities on offer very much and particularly look forward to using the generous outdoor learning areas for exploring and playing together.
- Pupils want to do well and appreciate what the teachers and other adults do to help them. Most pupils take pride in their work and are keen to learn.
- Nearly all pupils behave well in lessons and around school. There are some pupils with challenging behaviour who attend the school. Through good-quality support, most of them are able to participate fully in school life. However, a higher than usual number of pupils has been

excluded from the school in the past. The introduction of an effective range of initiatives to help these pupils, combined with the transfer of a small number of pupils to specialist units, have considerably reduced the exclusion rate.

- Adults and pupils get along well together because they like each other. The management of pupils' behaviour is consistently good.
- Special occasions, such as celebration assemblies, show the school at its best. Pupils enjoy joining together as a community and there is much good humour. They show genuine appreciation of each other's successes and look forward to ending each week on a positive note.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements.
- Parents are confident that the school keeps their children safe and, in discussion, pupils say that they feel very safe, including when using computers and the internet.
- Pupils know about different kinds of bullying. They say that incidents do not happen very often and that they are dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Attendance is currently average. The relentless efforts of the learning mentor in making sure that pupils who may be at risk of falling behind attend regularly have been a key factor in the school's improved attendance levels. The learning mentor works successfully with a number of families for whom regular attendance has been a problem.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well and has been particularly successful in raising pupils' and adults' performance in a short period of time. The school is well placed to move forward at the same rapid pace in the future. High expectations are set for all staff with regard to the progress that pupils make in their class. Teachers are far more accountable than in the past.
- The deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher contribute strongly to raising the quality of pupils' learning and the performance of staff. Indeed, all senior leaders provide excellent role models for others to follow and their tenacity has created a culture of rapid, sustained improvement. They are totally focused on raising achievement and are high-calibre teachers who support, mentor and work alongside their colleagues. Their strategies have proved very effective in improving the quality of teaching.
- The school improvement plan is a good working document, based on an accurate assessment of what needs to be done. Some other documentation, linked to policies and procedures, is not as up-to-date and some is in need of review.
- Subject leadership is good because teachers now have an accurate view about whether pupils are doing well enough in their subjects. The coordination of special educational needs has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. The school successfully removes barriers so that all pupils have an equal chance of success. For example, the school uses its pupil premium funding to provide special activities that interest and motivate pupils who sometimes find learning difficult.

- The school teaches different subjects in interesting and exciting ways. Pupils enjoy visits to places such as Warwick Castle and especially like the many music and sporting opportunities. These contribute greatly to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many examples of pupils extending their literacy and numeracy skills through planned opportunities in, for example, history work on the Second World War.
- Sport is an important part of the school's work. Sports funding has been used very effectively to provide specialist teaching and this contributes well to the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles. The school gives pupils a wide range of opportunities to develop their sporting skills. Thanks to the work of these additional specialist teachers and coaches, the school wins many awards in competitive sports, such as its recent rowing trophy.
- Links between the school and home are increasing, with parents becoming more involved in their children's learning.
- The local authority adviser knows the school very well and reviews its work regularly. She provides appropriate training when requested and has an accurate view of what the school does well and what needs improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The relatively new Chair of the Governing Body is knowledgeable and highly supportive of the school. He makes sure that new governors develop a good understanding of the school's data so that they know what needs to be done. As a result, governors are not afraid to challenge school leaders and have high expectations in terms of the quality of teaching and pupils' rates of progress. They are clear about the benefits and impact of pupil premium funding in, for example, closing the gap between the attainment of these pupils and others. They make sure that statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding and pupils' welfare. Governors review the headteacher's performance and check that the management of performance of all staff is helping them to improve. However, they have yet to make sure they understand the link between pay increases and these checks on teachers' performance.

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	104083
Local authority	Solihull
Inspection number	440511

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Carter
Headteacher	John Talbot
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2011
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