

Mary Howard CofE (VC) Primary School

School Lane, Edingale, Tamworth, B79 9JJ

Inspection dates		20–21 March 2014	
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children make outstanding progress in all areas of their early development during the Reception Year.
- Achievement at both Key Stages 1 and 2 is outstanding across a wide range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well for the next stages in their education.
- Leaders have established a record of consistently good and outstanding teaching and learning, through rigorous ways of checking on this, including using a wide range of evidence.
- Any pupils in danger of falling behind, or who need extra help, are identified quickly and given support to help them catch up. The most-able always rise to the challenge of demanding work and their achievement is outstanding.
- Pupils respond enthusiastically to interesting tasks. They try hard to do their very best.
- Marking of pupils work is of a consistently high quality across all subjects. It is highly effective in giving pupils guidance on how to improve their work.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop reading, writing and speaking and listening skills in other subjects are excellent and very effective. Opportunities to practise mathematics skills are not as well thought out.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This contributes greatly to pupils' harmonious relationships with each other and adults, their outstanding attitudes to learning and their excellent behaviour.
- Governors make a strong contribution to running the school. They check the school's performance for themselves. They question and challenge leaders and make crucial decisions to improve the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons. All observations of teaching were completed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with governors, the senior leadership team and pupils. The inspector had a meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed.
- Questionnaire responses from nine members of staff were analysed.
- There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be published. The inspector looked at 39 parents' views collected by the school through their own questionnaire.
- During this inspection, the inspector asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. A few pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. In this school, the additional funding is for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- 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 about average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils are taught in one of three mixed-age classes; Class 1 for the Reception Year and Year 1, Class 2 for Years 2 and 3 and Class 3 for Years 4, 5 and 6. Year groups are small and vary between five and 10 pupils.
- The headteacher is a national leader of education (NLE). Through the local authority and the National College of Leadership, she provides support to other primary schools to improve their overall effectiveness.
- Mary Howard Primary School is in federation with St Andrew's Primary School. This is a school judged by Ofsted to be outstanding. Both schools have the same headteacher and governing body. They have recently started to operate a shared budget.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the ways in which mathematical knowledge and understanding is developed and applied across the curriculum, so that this is done as effectively as it is for language and literacy skills.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Attainment on entry varies from year to year, due to there being small numbers in each year group. Typically children join the school with skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. In the Reception Year, they make excellent progress in all areas of learning, particularly in communication and personal development. Children are competent in early reading and writing and confidently investigate and explore different learning situations.
- The national test results need to be interpreted with care because only small numbers are assessed each year. There was a dip in attainment in 2012. This was a very small cohort and a high proportion of these pupils had significant obstacles to their learning. The school provided reliable evidence that these pupils made good progress from their lower than usual starting points. Overall standards in 2013 were above average level. In writing they were well above the national average and broadly average in reading and mathematics.
- In 2013 the proportion of pupils making nationally expected progress was similar to that nationally in reading and mathematics. All pupils made at least the expected progress in writing. The proportion making more than the expected progress was above the national average in reading and well above in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils currently in the school are making outstanding progress. All pupils in Year 6 have made at least the expected progress in reading and writing since the end of Year 2. A very high proportion has made more. In mathematics, almost all have made expected progress and the very large majority more than expected. Pupils in Year 5 are doing similarly well. A large majority is making more progress than that nationally expected in reading and writing and a majority in mathematics. Their attainment is already higher than is normally expected for Year 5 pupils.
- Pupils make excellent progress across a wide range of subjects other than English and mathematics and achieve high standards. They use reading and writing skills in other subjects exceptionally well and build a broad base of general knowledge. Singing is of a high quality. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument to a good standard. Art work on display around the school, and that seen in lesson observations during the inspection, is of an excellent quality. The primary sports funding is helping pupils improve their physical skills through specialist teaching. These are now good.
- Results of the national screening in Year 1 to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of phonics (sounds that letters make) are similar to those nationally. In 2013 all the girls achieved the expected level and did better than the boys. This difference in attainment has been addressed by the school so that for these pupils, progress is now excellent. Most are already reading at levels at or above those expected for their age and are on track to achieve above average levels by the end of the key stage.
- Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading a wide range of books. Most are fluent readers and have effective strategies to read unfamiliar words. They can recall main ideas from books with excellent levels of accuracy and detail. Older pupils use their reading skills exceptionally well across a wide range of subjects; reading makes an excellent contribution to outstanding learning.
- Most-able pupils make excellent progress. Last year a few pupils achieved the very highest level available in writing and mathematics and half of the pupils achieved at least the higher level 5 in

reading, writing and mathematics. In English grammar, a large majority gained the higher level 5. Most-able pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are on track to achieve similarly high results.

- Work for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very carefully set to the right level so they too make excellent progress. These pupils develop literacy and numeracy skills very well so they are able to keep up with other pupils.
- In 2013, the progress of pupils eligible for help through the pupil premium funding was similar to other pupils so they did not manage to catch up with other pupils. The gap in attainment has been addressed and the school's records of pupil progress show the few qualifying pupils are now making progress that is at least the same as others and often better.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Lesson observations, pupils' progress, workbooks and records of the school's own checks show teaching is outstanding. Teaching that is at least good and often outstanding is typical and is supported by rigorous monitoring of teaching, using a wide range of evidence.
- All pupils are taught in classes with pupils of different ages. In all classes, the progress of each pupil is carefully tracked and this information is used exceptionally well to set tasks that build on what each pupil has learned and can do. This means that each pupil learns at a brisk and steady pace as they move through the school.
- In the Reception Year, adults keep good, detailed records of individual progress in children's learning experiences and regularly update these based on their on-going observations of children. They use this information very effectively to make sure children develop good skills in reading, writing and mathematics, which prepares them well for future work. Children have vivid imaginations. For example, following a lesson on colour mixing, they produced some excellent interpretations of the school's grounds using shades of green.
- Because there are small numbers in each year group, adults are fully aware of each pupils' attainment. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils move on rapidly because teachers ensure that learning in reading, writing and mathematics builds firmly on pupils' previous achievements. Pupils learn exceptionally well because they are pressed to use and apply their reading and writing skills in English lessons and across a range of other subjects and so develop high level skills. Similarly, teachers ensure that they develop thinking and reasoning skills through solving mathematical problems set at a demanding level, ensuring that pupils work things out for themselves.
- Teachers take pupils' ideas and views fully into account in their teaching. At the beginning of a unit of work, pupils identify what it is they want to learn. These ideas are used in planning learning activities. Pupils therefore show high levels of interest in their work and do their very best.
- Marking of pupils' work is of a consistently high quality. Comments written in gold show that achievement is recognised and praised appropriately. These comments are linked to underlined sections, which helps pupils understand exactly what they have done well. Next steps identify what pupils need to do to correct mistakes or to take them to the next level. This marking method is consistent across all classes and all subjects. Pupils say marking is really helpful to them and their workbooks show they really improve using the marking.
- The school identifies the specific learning needs of each pupil eligible for the pupil premium. It uses this information well to tailor programmes of support and target any areas in which a pupil

might need additional help. Teachers and teaching assistants work with small groups or individual pupils. All this ensures that these pupils make excellent progress. Funds are also used to enable qualifying pupils to take part in out-of-school clubs and go on school trips to ensure they are fully included and have the same learning opportunities as others.

- In the same way, skilled adults are fully aware of the learning needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Because their needs are similarly met very well, these pupils make excellent progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. All groups, boys, girls, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those supported through pupil premium funding behave exceptionally well at all times. This contributes exceptionally well to their learning and the excellent progress they make across a range of subjects. Pupils behave in an impeccable manner at break times and around school.
- Parents and pupils speak highly about behaviour. Pupils fully understand the systems to manage behaviour and respond exceptionally well. Older pupils say there is a 'behaviour book' but that it is hardly ever used. They are all involved in deciding what they would like to see in their class charters and through this, understand fully their own rights and their responsibilities to others. This underpins their neat and tidy personal appearance, the excellent care they take to present their work neatly and the good care they take of the school buildings and grounds, which are free of graffiti and any litter.
- Pupils of different ages work and play well together. Older pupils show exceptional levels of care for the younger ones to ensure they are safe at all times. In lessons, pupils of all ages have highly positive attitudes to learning, with younger pupils in each class following the excellent examples set by older ones. They are exceptionally keen to do their very best and invariably show high levels of concentration, carrying on working without the direct supervision of an adult. This means that class teachers and teaching assistants can work with groups of children uninterrupted.
- Much of the work set involves pupils discussing, exploring and investigating. Pupils engage fully in this type of work and greatly enjoy this learning, listening respectfully to each other's views. They show a deep understanding of moral and social issues that arise through their work, such as in their study of Shakespeare where they made well-considered decisions and informed suggestions about who they thought was really responsible for Juliet's death.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are acutely aware of how they would deal with any issues that worry them, including issues related to the use of the internet. They are adamant that if any bullying did arise, it would be dealt with immediately. The school has been very successful in helping pupils who need support to improve their behaviour for the better.
- Pupils love coming to school and their attendance is consistently above average. They arrive to school in good time and are ready for a punctual start to the school day.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Staff are exceptionally well led by the headteacher. She is supported very well by the deputy headteacher, who keeps the school running at a high level of effectiveness whilst the

headteacher is working at the partner school or when being commissioned by the local authority to support less effective schools. Working very closely with the governing body, they have developed a culture through which everyone, adults and pupils alike, is expected to do their very best.

- Rigorous checking of teaching and pupils' progress has resulted in ongoing improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. All teaching is good and often outstanding. Targets set to improve teachers' work are challenging and have helped improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The headteacher and governors have made sure that staff have the expertise to meet their leadership responsibilities exceptionally well and to step into new roles when necessary in order to maintain highly effective leadership at all levels and across the federation. Subject leaders and those with responsibility for different key stages, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, have the expertise to implement new initiatives and to maintain the high quality of education provided. The school's leaders search out and very effectively implement initiatives to significantly enhance its work and develop children's skills.
- Membership of the Federation of Mary Howard and St Andrew's provides valuable opportunities for leadership expertise across the two schools and for staff to join with each other to develop their own leadership skills and teaching expertise.
- The curriculum is carefully planned to engage pupils' interest. As well as providing pupils with secure skills in English and mathematics, there is a strong emphasis on developing pupils as effective learners, able to learn and make their own choices. Learning skills are prominent in all subjects. This aspect of the curriculum is a key factor in forming pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. There are excellent links between literacy and other subjects through which pupils develop reading, writing and speaking and listening skills exceptionally well. The school has recognised that similar links between mathematics and other subjects are not as well developed.
- The curriculum, additional learning opportunities and the whole school environment support the outstanding promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All four strands are promoted equally well. Of particular note is the pupils' understanding of social and moral aspects, gained through philosophy lessons and through working within the rules they have agreed between themselves in their class charters.
- Finances are managed very well. The school has detailed arrangements for spending the primary sports funding. Action taken is widening opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities, with specialist teaching and enabling teachers improve their teaching skills through observing specialist teaching.
- The local authority gives a low level of support to this outstanding school. The local authority judges the school to be highly effective. It examines the school's end of key stage data and completes evaluations of this. Visits to the school by the school improvement partner are rare. The headteacher is a National Leader of Education and the local authority commissions her support for other less effective schools in order to improve their overall effectiveness. This also supports the professional development of the staff at Mary Howard, because often teachers from other schools visit them to observe effective practice.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is excellent. The governing body works exceptionally well with leaders at all levels throughout the federation. They are proactive in dealing with important issues identified through their regular visits and their own analysis of information on pupils' progress and

attainment. They are fully aware of how well the school is doing and how the achievement of pupils compares with that in other schools. This enables them to challenge and hold leaders accountable.

- Governors regularly visit the school to gain an excellent understanding of how well teachers are doing. They are very knowledgeable, and their professional expertise and training give them a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and how it can get even better. They use this knowledge to make crucial decisions, such as having a single budget for both schools in the federation.
- They challenge senior leaders on school improvement. They set demanding targets in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, linking pay to competence.
- They ensure statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

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	124249
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	440606

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Pegg
Executive Headteacher	Julie Bullous
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2011
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