

St Giles Catholic Primary School

Charles Street, Cheadle, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 1ED

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- This is a caring school where everyone is valued and able to thrive.
- Pupils of all abilities and from all backgrounds make good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils leave the school with good standards in all subjects, especially in reading.
- Teaching is good. Staff have close working relationships with pupils and value the efforts they make to improve their work.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The school principal and chief executive drive school improvement well. They make clear to staff their expectation that both teaching and achievement will improve further.
- There is a strong focus on raising the quality of teaching and good use of training activities with other schools.
- Governance is good. The board of directors ensure that they understand what the data tells them about achievement. This enables them to hold senior staff to account for the quality of education provided.
- Parents and carers are generally pleased with the quality of education and especially the high quality care their children receive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing are not as high as in other subjects. Pupils' grammar and punctuation are not always secure and boys' spelling is not as good as the girls'.
- Teachers do not always use data well enough to plan work that really challenges pupils of different abilities.
- Subject leaders have limited opportunities to check the accuracy of assessments, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, or use this information to identify the scope for further improvement in their areas.
- Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to write in depth and detail across a wide range of subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 14 lessons across the full age range of the school. Some of these were joint lesson observations with the school principal.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, and subject leaders for literacy and mathematics.
- Inspectors had discussions with the chief executive of the Painsley Multi-Academy Company and with the Chair of the Board of Directors (acting as school governors). Discussions also took place with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 51 parents and carers from the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors reviewed the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including data on pupils' progress and monitoring information relating to their achievement. Inspectors also listened to several pupils reading individually and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. They also considered in detail records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Janet Bird

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school, with single year-groups in each class.
- The school converted to become an academy school in September 2012. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was inspected it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The school is now part of the Painsley Multi-Academy Company, working with five other primaries and one secondary school. The head of the secondary school is the chief executive of the company and is a Local Leader in Education.
- Around 9% of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is well below the national average. In this school, this provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who are looked after by the local authority. Because of the small number of the latter groups of pupils they are not included in the report in order not to identify individuals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs identified at school action is slightly below the national average. The percentage identified at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Around 7% of pupils are from ethnic minority groups, which is well below the national average. About half of these pupils speak English as an additional language, with most of these pupils being bi-lingual.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of at which pupils make progress and raise their achievement further by:
 - improving boys' and girls' understanding of correct grammar
 - ensuring boys' spelling is as secure as that of the girls
 - encouraging all pupils to write imaginatively and in depth in a range of subjects.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently effective by:
 - making sure that teaching and support staff, particularly those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, use assessment information and their checks of pupils' recent work to plan activities that stimulate pupils' imagination and provide a good level of challenge for pupils of different abilities
 - ensuring that subject leaders check that teachers, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are accurate in their assessments, and use this information to identify improvements in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good.

- Children enter the Reception class with a wide range of skills and experiences which vary slightly from year to year but which, over time, are around the standard usually seen at their age. Inspection evidence suggests that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make steady progress overall.
- Checks on pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) show that, at the end of Year 1, their skills are above average. Some parents note their younger children are better at blending sounds together than their older siblings because the school now teaches phonic skills more systematically.
- As pupils move through the school they generally make good overall progress. This includes the most-able, those speaking English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Data show that since the school became an academy, the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 has improved, particularly in their reading. In Key Stage 2 achievement is good overall, and the percentages of pupils making good progress broadly matches national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' reading is a strength. Across the school both boys and girls read well and many become confident and accurate readers. Most read regularly at home and in school, including to staff and to trained volunteers. This ensures they continue to develop their skills well.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, with several of the older pupils declaring this is their favourite subject. Pupils in Year 2 made good progress when collecting items from the school field and then sorting and counting these in groups of two, five and ten. More-able pupils quite confidently counted on and back from these numbers, and compared the totals found. Excellent progress was also observed in Year 6 where pupils were involved in solving problems with a focus on division. Pupils were keen to explain the different methods which they had used to solve problems including 'chunking' to speed up their calculations. More-able pupils were able to use advanced mathematical vocabulary confidently and accurately.
- Assessment data indicates that, across the school, progress in writing is typically not as strong as in other areas. The school is now involved in projects to focus more on the development of writing skills. While progress is improving in writing, including spelling, grammar and punctuation, achievement is not yet as good as it could be. In some year groups, boys do not achieve as well as the girls in writing and particularly spelling. The school has extended reading materials to appeal to boys and is now working to develop better writing activities because some boys say this is their least favourite subject.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to their classmates. These pupils often do better than similar pupils nationally. Last year they were about four months behind their classmates in mathematics, six months behind in reading and about three months behind in writing. Additional funding has been used to provide individual or small groups support which is tailored to the pupils' abilities. This is helping to narrow the gaps between these pupils and their school peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress from their starting points. Last year they did much better in reading than in writing and mathematics, but records indicate overall progress is generally good.

The quality of teaching is good.

- Since becoming an academy, leaders have brought about a strong focus upon improving pupils' learning. Their lesson observations and samples of pupils' work show that teaching is improving and is now good overall. During the inspection most teaching was good and none was inadequate.
- A key feature of teaching across the school is the strong working relationship between staff and pupils. The support and praise given to pupils helps to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' books show that the marking of work is thorough and clearly indicates what they need to improve. Staff systematically follow up the weaknesses they have found in pupils' work and ensure pupils address these effectively in subsequent work.
- Currently, the most consistently effective learning is in Year 6 and, at times, this is outstanding. This is because staff have high expectations of the pupils, challenge them well through the effective use of questions and ensure that work is well matched to their different abilities. In other year groups, however, planned activities are not always securely based on the information the school holds of pupils' progress and do not always provide sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils. There are few opportunities for pupils to consolidate their writing skills in other subjects.
- The support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those speaking English as an additional language and the pupils entitled to support from the pupil premium is good. This is carefully planned to support their learning and meet their different needs, whatever their starting points. Some of the more-able pupils do very well and produce work of high quality.
- The use of the additional primary schools sports funding is enabling pupils to make outstanding progress in developing cricket skills. Such funding is also used to enhance teachers' subject knowledge and develop their confidence in teaching physical education.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, inspection evidence, particularly work on display, school records and samples of recent work indicate that teachers do not always use information on children's progress well enough to really challenge the children and stimulate their imagination.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to their learning, say they like coming to the school and believe they get on well together. They typically behave well both in lessons and when moving around the school. They take turns and share equipment well.
- Attendance is above average and most pupils arrive punctually, with systematic checks made on those who arrive late. Attendance is well-managed by administrative staff and followed up to help minimise persistent absences.
- Pupils like the close working relationship with the adults in school and, when asked what they like most, several say 'maths' and 'the staff'. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work; most work well in lessons and as shown by the work in their books, concentrate well and try hard.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff are responsive to concerns about safety and take immediate action to address issues when identified. Risk assessments are carried out although not always in a very rigorous manner.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. They know that bullying can take place in several forms and older pupils are able to explain cyber bullying. A small number of parents and carers indicate they have concerns about bullying, but most parents and pupils appear confident the school deals with this in an appropriate manner.

The leadership and management are good.

- Since assuming academy status, there has been a clear recognition that the quality of teaching and learning was not consistently good enough. This is clearly being addressed and provision in all areas is improving and is now largely good.
- The school principal works closely with the chief executive to drive improvement forwards. The principal and external staff monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning systematically. Senior staff also scrutinise samples of work in key areas and work with other schools to moderate the levels given to pupils' work. Monitoring activities are well linked to professional development opportunities, including visits to other academy schools and training events. The monitoring of performance is linked to pay awards. Senior staff have a good awareness of the key strengths of the school and the areas for further improvement.
- The principal and academy leaders conduct much of the monitoring of the work of the school. The literacy and numeracy leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader have little release time to check teachers' use of assessment information and identify where improvements are needed in teaching and learning. Subject and other middle leaders are involved in the scrutiny of work but this has not always been rigorous enough, for example in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to ensure that assessment information is carefully collated and provides a clear record of progress.
- The school provides an appropriate range of subjects and activities for the age and stage of development of the pupils. The primary school sport funding is used carefully with the excellent skills of a sports coach making a considerable impact on pupils' involvement in sport. This is reflected both in lessons and the take-up of after-school activities and is making a positive contribution to developing pupils' physical skills and well-being.
- The pupils' spiritual development is a key priority of the school. Pupils enjoy taking part in a whole-school Mass and children in Reception extended their speaking and listening skills in an excellent discussion about why the whole school goes to Church together. Pupils are able to reflect well on their experiences which also support their moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire and those spoken to believe their children are happy and well looked after. Some accurately identify that teaching in the past has been variable but is improving.
- The school is not part of the local authority but chooses to 'buy in' some services to support administration. . The school works closely with other schools in the Painsley Multi-Academy Company. This has been very beneficial in identifying the features of effective teaching. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now working more closely with other organisations to ensure initial assessments are not too cautious and take full account of the range of children's skills. There are also links with schools in the local area to provide other activities including involvement in sports competitions.

■ Procedures to safeguard pupils meet current government requirements. Staff ensure that pupils have equal access to activities, and use pupil premium funding to ensure those who are eligible are able to attend school visits and take part in the full range of activities. The school is very effective in fostering positive relationships. With the many improvements made especially since converting to an academy, the school shows that it has the capacity to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance of the school is provided by the board of directors which works with the seven schools of the Painsley Multi-Academy Company. Governance is good. Joint meetings are held with all school leaders in both full meetings and committee meetings. The 'Standards and Provision' group looks carefully at school assessment information and uses this to ensure support and funding is made available. With seven schools to work with, the day-to-day responsibilities of managing the school are devolved to the school principal. However, careful checks are made of a range of information to identify where the school is on its journey towards further improvement.
- The board of directors are well informed about the quality of teaching and learning. They support the principal in managing teachers' performance and pay-related issues. The board holds senior leaders to account for the standards achieved. They ensure that additional funding, including the pupil-premium and sports funding, is used as intended to improve standards.

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	138724
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	427031

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	199
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair	John Pennington
Principal	Anne Green
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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