

St John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

St John's Way, Ragworth, Stockton-on-Tees, County Durham, TS19 0FB

Inspection dates 10–11 June 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.

- From their low starting points, pupils make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in mathematics are improving quickly.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those in the infant assessment and support class achieve well. In individual cases, their personal development is exceptional.
- Those pupils eligible for the pupil premium also achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding, because tasks are planned with care and precision.
- A rich curriculum provides a wide range of interesting first-hand experiences. High-quality care contributes effectively to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle very well because adults create a happy family atmosphere and continuously use praise and encouragement to promote good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and at times exemplary. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school and are keen to do well. Attendance is above average, and is greatly improved since the previous inspection.
- The drive and determination of the headteacher, adeptly supported by the governing body, have had a decisive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning. All staff share the high ambitions.
- There is exceptionally strong partnership working between parents and the school staff.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching over time is not yet outstanding in order to sustain a pattern of high achievement in all subjects, especially in mathematics.
- Opportunities are sometime missed to adjust activities to stretch pupils' thinking even more and ensure their work is corrected and improved.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons, including six paired observations and work scrutiny carried out with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons and undertook learning walks around the school in order to check the quality of what is provided for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and had discussions with the headteacher, subject leaders, staff, governors and the local authority senior education adviser.
- They also examined a range of documents including those related to safeguarding, the school's view of how well it is doing, the monitoring of staff performance, the school's improvement plan and records relating to pupils' progress and behaviour.
- The inspectors took account of 41 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 35 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Clive Petts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Graeme Clarke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school,
- Almost all children are of White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above that usually found.
- Currently, a well above average proportion of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2013, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school provides a breakfast club each day.
- The school has a local authority funded infant assessment and support class for up to 10 pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is inspiring and thought-provoking in order to raise achievement further, especially in mathematics by:
 - sharing the existing imaginative and inspirational practice more widely across the staff
 - quickly adapting activities when pupils find them too easy or too hard
 - making certain that questioning relentlessly checks and tests pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - ensuring that opportunities are provided for pupils to respond to teacher's marking to correct or improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are significantly below those typically expected for their age. Speaking, listening, mathematical, social and emotional skills are particularly weak. Overall, children make good progress, although it is faster in the Reception class, because the inspiring teaching and support they receive effectively develops early reading and writing skills and establishes clear routines for learning and behaviour. This prepares them well for the next stage.
- Concerted action to improve pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2, which has been low in the past, is proving successful. Although attainment remains below that expected, a more consistent pattern of good progress and higher achievement has been established. This includes for those pupils in the infant and assessment class.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has varied over time, reflecting the often high proportion of pupils with considerable learning difficulty and inconsistencies in the pattern of teaching, especially in mathematics. Typically, attainment has been broadly average overall, although higher in writing than in reading and mathematics. Predictions for the performance of the current Year 6, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that attainment is rising quickly in all subjects and gaps between the performance of different groups are being eradicated as result of concerted school action. Attainment in mathematics and reading is on course to be average and writing above average.
- The most able pupils are benefitting from lively, imaginative learning. Above average proportions of pupils are on course to exceed what is expected of them in all subjects. In mathematics, challenging teaching means that the most talented are on track to reach the highest level (Level 6) in the Year 6 national tests.
- Reading skills are improving as a result of the successful whole-school drive to foster confidence and a love of reading. At age six, although skills are below average, fluency and accuracy in reading are improving, as a result of effective teaching of how to blend sounds and letters together (phonics) to make sense of words. Older pupils read widely and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and themes.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress. Pupils make rapid progress developing essential social and emotional skills, because their abilities and needs are accurately identified and individual support pinpoints their requirements precisely. This includes those pupils in the infant assessment and support class.
- Those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, achieve well as a result of the extra funding being used effectively. Although there are gaps in pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2, including in their phonics skills when compared to their classmates, they have closed by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. This demonstrates the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have taken resolute action to improve the quality of teaching and learning, which is now consistently good. Now and then, teaching is imaginative and inspiring. Consequently, achievement is continuously improving and inconsistencies in the pattern of progress and achievement are being systematically eliminated.
- Excellent relationships between staff and pupils underpin the high expectations that teachers have of pupils of all ages, backgrounds and starting points. Staff work assiduously to ensure that all pupils can achieve success and reach their full potential. Thought-provoking teaching encourages pupils to think critically, explain their thinking and justify their solutions and decisions.
- When pupils' progress is rapid and achievement high:

- adults have an in-depth grasp of each pupils' level of development and what they need to learn next
- questioning is used skilfully to continually check pupils' knowledge and deepen their understanding
- that essential spark is added to learning to create challenging and interesting problems for pupils to solve
- marking is used to ensure pupils understand what they have completed well and what they need to do next to improve.
- When the pace of learning slows or is a little more uneven it is because:
 - the demands made of pupils are not always closely matched or adjusted quickly enough to meet pupils' abilities and extend their thinking
 - questioning does not relentlessly test pupils' knowledge and understanding and check for any misconceptions
 - insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to correct or improve their work following marking
 - opportunities are missed for pupils to practise their skills, especially in number, shape, space and measure.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's speaking and listening are developed very well, enabling them to learn from each other and from adults. Interesting and exciting teaching develops early reading and writing skills quickly. For example, a group of children in the Reception class were observed completely absorbed watching a classmate dressed in a wolf's costume in a scene from the story of Little Red Riding Hood, before confidently writing sentences describing the wolf's long bushy black tail.
- When achievement is highest, teachers' use their knowledge of pupils' earlier learning to set the precise level of challenge and demand. Consequently, progress is brisk because pupils are extremely well motivated and involved. Teaching assistants closely follow pupils' thinking, continually checking their understanding. However, this successful practice is not shared widely enough across the whole staff.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In classrooms and at social times the behaviour of pupils is good and sometimes exemplary. At the start of the day, the popular breakfast club sets a very positive tone for the school day. Classrooms, corridors and social areas are happy, relaxed and friendly places to be. The excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development encourages considerate, caring and respectful relationships between pupils and with adults.
- In discussions, pupils report that relationships in school are excellent. The pupils remarked, 'If you are down, friends encourage you to keep going', reflects the happy, supportive family atmosphere described by pupils. They are well informed about bullying in its different forms. Pupils observe that staff are always on hand to resolve the very few concerns or worries they may have.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe and secure is good.
- All parents agree that their children are well looked after and kept safe in school. In the playground, pupils' play is active and safe. They respond positively to any adult guidance and advice and are safety conscious.
- Those pupils whose needs are complex or who are potentially vulnerable are thoughtfully, sensitively and skilfully managed. This includes those arriving in the infant assessment and support class at other than the normal time. As a result, pupils confidently join in a wide range of school activities.
- Pupils are polite, attentive and helpful. Attendance was below average at the time of the

previous inspection but is now above average. This is the result of the successful working relationship the school has with parents, reducing some pupils' persistent and unauthorised absence.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher leads with determination, energy and enthusiasm and has a complete grasp of what is needed to make certain that achievement and teaching are outstanding over time. Her clear plan and sense of purpose is boosted by an effective deputy headteacher. Their enthusiasm and verve are shared by a tightly-knit staff team.
- Effective leadership, including at subject level, is successfully accelerating the pace of school improvement. Systems to check performance are robust and thorough. As a result, these performance judgements are accurate. Pupils' progress information is used effectively to strengthen the drive to sustain a consistent pattern of high achievement for all groups of pupils.
- Teaching and learning support is well led and managed. Training programmes are sharply focused upon school priorities, including those of the infant assessment and support class and the development needs of individual members of staff. Performance management closely links salary to the quality of learning in the classroom.
- The curriculum is rich and varied and ensures pupils develop the essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics. A wide range of interesting visits and visitors enhance pupils' experiences and help to bring learning to life. For example, Year 5, whose adopted author is David Walliams, sent him a short video they made acting out scenes from *Gangsta Granny*. He sent a personal reply via DVD praising their, 'fantastic, imaginative video', with a friendly wink for the pupils and class teachers at the end of the message!
- The primary school sport funding is used successfully to enhance teachers' skills and raise pupils' participation and skills. New skills, such as street dance and gymnastics, boost pupils' confidence and skills adding, greatly to their enjoyment.
- The use of pupil premium funding is managed effectively to close the attainment gaps between those eligible for the extra funding and their classmates. For example, part funding the school 'Experiences Fortnight', which enables pupils to participate in activities for the first time, such as climbing, horse riding and practising circus skills.
- Relationships with parents and families are excellent and support the parents' increasingly high level of involvement in their children's development. Strong links with specialist services make a valuable contribution to the well-being and development of pupils, particularly those with complex needs.
- The local authority is both challenging and supportive. This was evident in the recent collaborative review of the school's performance. Consequently, the local authority has an accurate view of how well the school is doing.
- Safeguarding and child protection meet requirements. Procedures are clearly and firmly established and much high-quality practice is adopted in the day-to-day management and care of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are both supportive and committed. They demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's performance. They are well aware of what is now needed to improve further and achieve their high ambitions, because they systematically check the quality of pupils' learning and its impact on their achievement. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and hold staff to account in positive ways. They manage resources carefully, scrutinise the effectiveness of staff performance management and efficiently and methodically check the impact of pupil premium funding on the progress and attainment of pupils.

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	111668
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	443980

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Symington
Headteacher	Kerry Coe
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2010
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