

# St Peter's CofE (C) Primary School

Church Lane, Hixon, Stafford, ST18 0PS

**Inspection dates** 16–17 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and leave Year 6 with standards that are well above average.
- Provision in the Early Years is good. There is a strong focus on helping children to quickly develop the best possible learning habits. The school's partnership with parents is outstanding.
- The teaching of early reading is outstanding; consequently, pupils make rapid progress and are avid readers by the end of Year 2.
- Teachers have high expectations of the most-able pupils, who make consistently good progress.
- Behaviour is often exemplary. Pupils are thoughtful, well-mannered and considerate of others.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and their understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet is excellent.
- The school provides exceptionally well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher is a strong leader, who is well supported by other managers and governors. Together they have improved teaching and achievement, especially of the most-able pupils.
- Leaders' evaluations of teaching are accurate and clearly identify what each teacher can do to improve.
- The school has shown good improvement since it was last inspected. Key weaknesses at that time are now strengths in the school's provision.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils of middle ability do not always make good progress in mathematics, because teachers move them on to new work too quickly. Teachers do not give these pupils sufficient opportunities to revisit and revise topics that they do not fully understand.
- Not all teachers insist that pupils respond to the comments they write in their books.
- Leaders, including governors, do not analyse the performance of pupils of differing abilities in sufficient depth.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, including six seen jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. The inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector considered the 33 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. He also considered the views that parents expressed in the school's own questionnaire, as well as in letters and emails sent directly to the inspector.
- The inspector observed the school's work, including arrangements for keeping pupils safe. He looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

### Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British.
- Around one pupil in thirty is disabled or has special educational needs and is supported at school action. This proportion is well below the average for other schools.
- Around one pupil in fifteen is disabled or has special educational needs and is supported through school action plus or has a statement of special educational needs. This proportion is average.
- Around one in 10 pupils is supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked-after children); this proportion is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is a Local Leader of Education. In the last academic year she has provided support for: Woodlands Primary School, Tamworth; Great Wood Primary School, Tean; Redbrook Hayes Primary School, Rugeley and Berkswich Primary School, Stafford. The support has been aimed at helping the schools to improve or to support the appointment of a new headteacher.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, particularly for pupils of middle ability in mathematics, so that all pupils make at least good progress by ensuring teachers:
  - check that pupils are secure in their understanding before moving them on to new work
  - give pupils opportunities to revisit and revise topics that they do not fully understand
  - make sure that pupils consistently respond to the comments teachers write in their books.
- Ensure senior leaders and governors analyse data on pupils' progress according to their ability in greater depth to identify more fully any groups who may not be doing as well as others.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher sets high expectations for staff and pupils. Morale is high and all staff strive to meet the headteacher's expectations and improve the quality of education provided by the school. Staff consistently model high standards of respect and courtesy towards others in all that they do. Pupils' behaviour, consequently, is frequently outstanding.
- The school has improved significantly since it was last inspected. Weaknesses from that time, such as pupils' understanding of other cultures, have been addressed with great success and are now strengths.
- The curriculum provides exceptionally well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that they are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils are given many moral dilemmas to consider, such as how can Robin Hood be a 'goody' if he steals, and The Sheriff of Nottingham a 'baddy' if he upholds the law? Pupils write to, and visit, other schools in areas different from their own to gain a deep understanding of life for people of different faiths and cultures.
- All pupils are treated equally in school. Pupils are taught to respect others' views and accept differences in their own beliefs and culture and those of people who come from different backgrounds. The school takes a very strong line on any form of discriminatory language so any very rare instances do not recur.
- Leaders at all levels have worked effectively together to improve teaching. Accurate checks on its quality are carried out by the headteacher, subject leaders and governors. These provide detailed feedback to teachers on what can be improved. Even the very best lessons have areas identified where small changes can help pupils to learn more quickly.
- Subject leaders and those responsible for aspects such as the Early Years and special educational needs have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. They have produced good quality plans of action that are supporting the school's improvement well.
- The extra funding for sports in primary schools has been used well. There has been a significant increase in the numbers of pupils participating in sport.
- The way that the pupil premium funds have been used has proved successful in boosting the progress of individuals, so that almost all reach at least the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 6, and often exceed them.
- Leaders plan well and act decisively to tackle weaknesses where they have been identified. However, their analysis of data does not always go deep enough. The progress of, for example, boys, girls and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is analysed well, but there has been little analysis of the progress of pupils according to their ability. As a result, leaders were unaware of the relatively slower progress of pupils of middle ability in mathematics and so have not taken sufficient steps to raise their achievement.
- The Local Authority provides only very limited support to the school. It accepts that some of its evaluations of the school's performance have misled the school's leaders and have not helped the school to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They gain a clear insight into the quality of education it provides through their visits to the school, including to observe lessons. These observations, together with detailed reports from the headteacher, ensure that governors are well-informed about the quality of teaching, so that they can accurately check what is being done to improve it and ensure that only the best teaching is rewarded through increases in pay.
  - Governors are particularly effective at checking the quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They ensure that the school meets all its statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding pupils and that it encourages pupils to understand and accept the beliefs of others whose

lives may be very different to their own. Governors are secure in their understanding of the school's performance data, but rely on the headteacher to provide a detailed analysis of how well the school compares with other schools, and have not therefore identified that middle ability pupils do not always progress as well as the others.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The best possible attitudes to learning are promoted as soon as children join the Early Years, so that they quickly learn how to behave in lessons.
- Pupils from Year 1 onwards come to school ready to learn and get straight down to work on the activities that await them when they arrive. In lessons, pupils work hard and concentrate on their tasks, keen to complete them to the best of their ability.
- Around the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They move around the corridors in a quiet and orderly manner. Lunch times are a time for quiet conversation as pupils eat their meals calmly and happily. In assemblies, pupils pay close attention to the speakers and are very keen to get involved in the activities. They sing with great joy and reflect sensibly and with the utmost respect when given the opportunity to do so, for example, during prayers.
- Pupils respond exceptionally well to the school's expectations of how they will relate to others. They demonstrate outstanding levels of respect and courtesy, and their manners are impeccable.
- Pupils' attendance has been high for several years and their punctuality to school is exceptional.
- The school has established a very effective 'nurture group'. This has a strong track record of helping disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs related to behaviour to learn to manage their emotions and behave well.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. There are comprehensive checks on the suitability of adults to work with children and the school provides a safe and welcoming environment in which to learn.
- Instances of bullying are extremely rare and acted upon quickly and effectively, so that incidents do not recur. Other cases of, for example, homophobic name calling, are equally rare. Staff take these kinds of incidents very seriously, always involving parents and explaining to pupils why their actions are unacceptable.
- As a result of the school's systematic actions to protect them, pupils feel totally safe in school. They also have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, such as when using the internet. Their visits to cities also teach them how to remain vigilant on busy roads and in urban situations that they may not encounter in the countryside.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- From the moment that children enter the Early Years, they are assessed accurately by teachers. This is particularly effective in reading, where teachers and teaching assistants take careful account of what letters and sounds children already know when deciding what to teach next. Staff quickly build children's knowledge and understanding, while at the same time encouraging them to develop a love of reading, so that children make outstanding progress and learn to read at an early age.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons because they are given many well-planned and imaginative situations in which to apply their newly-learnt skills. This is particularly the case when teachers plan activities to develop pupils' skills in writing and mathematics. Pupils wrote to pen pals in Birmingham, for example, after

learning how to set out letters, and calculated train times during a visit to York, having first learnt to read a timetable. These skills prepare pupils very well for life outside school.

- Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of what the most-able pupils can achieve, so they make good progress. Pupils are given demanding tasks, such as deciding where to use parenthesis appropriately in their writing, or ordering fractions with different denominators in Years 5 and 6.
- Less-able and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have tasks carefully adapted and explained to them by teaching assistants, so that they know exactly what they have to do. Staff prompt pupils to think and work things out for themselves, so that they are able to make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils receive one-to-one tuition that successfully helps them to make up the ground lost in the past, by focussing on specific weaknesses in their skills, such as addition in Year 1 and reading comprehension in Year 4.
- Pupils of middle ability are often given the same tasks as the most-able, especially in mathematics. They always try their best, but they are not always given enough time to complete the tasks or become completely secure in their understanding before moving on to the next topic. Often, such pupils are not given the opportunity to go over their work and make sure that they are ready to learn something new, so they do not make as much progress as others.
- Teachers mark pupils' books frequently and accurately. However, they do not give pupils the time to correct their spellings or revise their answers to mathematical problems, so pupils do not always learn from their mistakes. Not all teachers insist pupils respond to the comments teachers make in their marking.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Children join the school with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years so that their standards when they join Year 1 are above average.
- The outstanding progress that pupils make in learning to read at an early age leads to very high results in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. By the end of Year 2, pupils are avid readers with even the least-able only experiencing difficulty when attempting to read really difficult words.
- Good progress continues as pupils move up the school. By the time pupils leave Year 6 their standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics and they are very well-prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Disadvantaged pupils are successfully helped to catch up with their peers. They often start with standards that are lower than others in the school, but the individual support they receive means that they consistently make up the ground lost in the past. By the time they leave Year 6 they reach standards in both English and mathematics that match the levels expected and are often higher. There are too few such pupils to provide full comparisons between their attainment and other pupils nationally, without identifying individuals.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equally as good progress as the others. The work they are given is carefully adapted and explained to them, so they are able to work problems out for themselves and achieve well.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in all their subjects. The proportions reaching the highest levels are consistently well-above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils of middle ability do not progress as well as others. They make steady, but rarely good, progress in mathematics.

**The early years provision is good**

- Good teaching ensures that children achieve well in the Early Years. Staff consistently reinforce the importance of good attitudes to learning from the moment that children start, so that behaviour is consistently very good. Children quickly learn to sit properly, listen to others, take turns and follow instructions. This approach means that children make good progress and are well-prepared to start Year 1.
- Children start with skills that are typical for their age. They quickly learn their numbers and start to write, so standards of writing and in mathematics are above average by the start of Year 1. Children make rapid progress in learning letters and the sounds that they make, so standards in reading are well above average by the time they start Year 1.
- The sense of partnership the school fosters between staff and parents means that links with parents are outstanding. In particular, parents are given plenty of advice as how to help their children learn at home, by, for example, playing games that help them to learn their letters and numbers.
- Good leadership is driving improvement. Standards in writing, for example, lag slightly behind those in other aspects when children first arrive in school. The leader has identified this as a priority and has drawn up effective plans to improve the progress made by children in this aspect.
- The assessments of children's progress and attainment are accurate and used well to ensure that most children build quickly on what they have previously learnt.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124304
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448567

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	133
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeremy Hodgkiss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Alexander
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01889 270233
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