

Grange Infant School

Shobnall Close, Burton-on-Trent, DE14 2HU

Inspection dates 14–15 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 are making good progress and attaining average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and all pupils has closed due to the careful way the school has used the additional funding to support these pupils.
- The leadership team provides the school with a very clear sense of direction. The headteacher has demonstrated rigorous and effective leadership in improving teaching and achievement.
- Pupils' achievement, behaviour and the quality of teaching and learning are all good due to the effective way leaders monitor these aspects of the school's work and the intensive programme of staff development they have introduced.
- The Core Group, comprising the headteacher, local authority adviser and governors, has held staff to account for pupils' progress very effectively.
- Governors have offered leaders good support and challenge in equal measures. They know the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Provision is good in the early years and most children are now attaining a good level of development. They are well prepared for their move to Year 1.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are interested in their lessons and achieve well because teachers encourage them to develop a love of learning.
- Pupils are well looked after and safety is a high priority of the school. Parents say that since the appointment of the new headteacher, safety has improved.
- The school makes effective use the additional sports funding to enhance pupils' physical development health and fitness. Pupils take part in a wide range of sports activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the exciting range of learning opportunities offered through the well planned curriculum. Pupils have good opportunities to explore British values and are well prepared for life in modern day Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' spelling and handwriting, including that of the most- and least-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are not always secure.
- Not all teachers follow the school's marking policy and too many of the pupils' errors are left unchecked.
- Recently appointed middle leaders do not have enough time to monitor the effectiveness of the school's marking policy in their areas of responsibility.
- In the early years, teachers do not use the opportunities provided by play activities to help children to practise forming their letters and numbers correctly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 16 lessons covering all year groups. Some of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and heard several pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, senior leaders, the Chair of Governors and one other governor.
- Inspectors examined the questionnaires completed by 27 staff. They also considered the responses of 10 parents who completed the online questionnaire. Inspectors also held informal discussions with parents and looked at the school’s own questionnaires given to parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school’s self-evaluation, school improvement plans, behaviour records and documentation relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also examined documents relating to the monitoring of teaching and the management of teachers’ performance were also examined.
- The school’s child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stuart Pearson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is above the national average, although very few pupils are at the early stages of English language acquisition.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- Children in the Nursery attend part-time and those in the Reception classes attend full time.
- The school operates a free breakfast club for pupils every morning.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding is broadly average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- In September 2014 the school was led and managed by the deputy headteacher and a new board of governors. The new headteacher took up her role in January 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - place greater emphasis on helping the most- and least-able pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to form their letters correctly and spell words appropriate to their age and ability accurately
 - develop their marking by identifying the next steps pupils needs to take to improve their work and ensuring that pupils use teachers' guidance to avoid the same errors in future.
- Improve the monitoring of middle leaders by ensuring that they have time to evaluate the consistency with which staff implement the school's marking policy in their areas of responsibility, as well as its impact on raising standards.
- Improve teaching in the early years by ensuring that all staff are providing sufficient opportunities for children to learn how to form their letters and numbers correctly in play activities.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good. When the newly appointed headteacher took up the role she introduced rigorous systems of performance management, staff training and accountability. With the help of the local authority, she quickly set about holding staff to account for pupils' progress. The headteacher has effectively challenged staff about pupils' low outcomes in phonics, reading and writing. She has put many systems in place to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The headteacher has also created a compelling 'can do' culture among the staff and the pupils, who have both responded readily to her high expectations.
- As a result of the regular monitoring undertaken by the headteacher, her uncompromising feedback to staff and the provision of carefully targeted training to address gaps in teachers' knowledge, the quality of teaching has markedly improved, particularly in the last year. Good teaching has been instrumental in ensuring that, this year, children in Year 1 improved their results in the national phonics screening check so that they are now in line with the national average. Pupils across the school are making good progress in reading writing and mathematics. Standards in national assessments and tests have risen from last year. The current group of Year 2 pupils are on course to make good progress and attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave.
- The performance of staff and teaching assistants is managed well. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning because they have been well trained in how to support both pupils and teachers in classes.
- School leaders have established an ethos in which pupils' achievement is improving and is now good. Staff morale is high and all staff feel valued. 'Our new headteacher has given us back our sense of worth and we love coming to school', said one teacher speaking for many.
- Middle leaders, who are mostly new to their posts, are knowledgeable and generally lead their areas of responsibility effectively. However, they have not yet fully monitored the impact of the school's new policies, such as the marking policy, on pupils' outcomes or checked that they are being implemented consistently by all staff.
- The school's promotion of equal opportunities is good. The school uses its additional funding through the pupil premium effectively. The performance of this, indeed of all groups of pupils, is closely monitored by the Core Group and additional funding is quickly allocated to address any emerging aspect of underachievement. For example, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and all pupils in the school has now been closed in reading writing and mathematics.
- There is no discrimination in the school and all pupils have full access to the curriculum. Pupils from a wide range of backgrounds get on well together and there are no racist incidents. There is a strong sense of community within the school and every pupil is valued as an individual.
- The well thought out curriculum ensures pupils learn about and have a good understanding of different faiths and lifestyles. Displays around the school celebrate diversity and there is a strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which promotes good relationships and behaviour. Staff promote British values through their sensitive use of the school rules, which focus on justice and tolerance, and this contributes well to the school being a harmonious community. Pupils are consequently well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements for safeguarding. Policies are clear, effective and fully understood by staff. Staff are well trained, follow the correct procedures at all times and are vigilant about all issues of child protection. Systems of record keeping are detailed and precise. Visitors to school are selected with care and parents say that they know that their children are well looked after.

- The school makes good use of the additional primary sports funding. Coaches from Burton Albion Football Club are regular visitors to the school. Teachers work alongside specialist sports coaches to improve their teaching of physical education and games. Pupils are able to participate in a wide range of team games which has a positive effect on the development of their physical skills and their ability to collaborate.
- The school receives good support from local authority officers, who have helped the headteacher to hold staff to account for the progress of different groups of pupils, evaluate the effectiveness of school improvement and monitor the impact of spending on pupils' outcomes.
- The school engages well with parents. Parents express positive views about the school, especially in the way that it is helping them to understand their children's learning needs.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Effective governance is a key factor in this school's success. Governors gain an independent view of the school's effectiveness by making regular visits and by independently analysing the school's data. They have undertaken a skills audit to ensure that they have the correct skills set to be effective and have co-opted a governor with expertise in finance to ensure that they spend the school's funds wisely. They know about the quality of teaching in each year group and what is being done to improve it. Governors ensure that there is a clear link between teachers' impact on pupils' achievement and any salary increases. They are fully involved in self-evaluation and have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for development.
 - Governors are rigorous in making sure that all statutory requirements are met and have ensured that all staff have attended training to identify any pupils that might be at risk of radicalisation and extremism.
 - They ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed when staff are employed. They have improved safety around the school and ensure that the views of parents are sought regularly and promptly acted on as necessary.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils know the importance of school rules and behave well in and around the school. Pupils say that behaviour in the school is good and that pupils are rewarded for trying hard and producing good work. They say that their teachers are fair, that there is no bullying and if it were to occur staff would deal with it quickly.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. The headteacher ensures that attendance is monitored carefully and no holidays are permitted during term time. The school has a good range of strategies in place to ensure that a few persistent non-attenders are encouraged to come to school. As a result of the good systems for monitoring attendance, the ready welcome and care provided by the breakfast club and the energetic work of the family worker, punctuality and attendance have improved.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are attentive in lessons. They are keen to learn, ask questions and are eager to take part in the wide range of extracurricular activities that the school has on offer.
- Pupils say that their teachers are fair and consistently apply rewards and sanctions. They say that all pupils are treated fairly and that they know that teachers will give them help when they need it.
- Pupils are proud of their school, especially the library, which is stocked with a good range of interesting books for them to read.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils told inspectors that they feel completely safe because they know that all staff look after them well. Parents are also positive about the safety of their children and how well they are looked after.

- All staff undertake safeguarding training regularly. The school's effective liaison with outside agencies ensures pupils' safety. Staff maintain meticulous records of the school's involvement with different agencies, especially those pertaining to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The school's behaviour logs show that there have been very few incidents of bullying or even name calling in the past two years.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe on the internet. They know about cyber-bullying and the risks the internet can bring. Visits to the school by the emergency services and specific lessons on e-safety ensure that they know how to keep themselves safe.

The quality of teaching

is good

- In a comparatively short time, the headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has established consistently good teaching across the school. She has set clear criteria to define 'the non-negotiables' for teaching in every lesson. She monitors the consistency with which staff meet these requirements regularly and all staff receive feedback on what they need to do in order to improve. This, together with the well-focused training programmes she has introduced, has rapidly improved teachers' practice. Consequently achievement has improved and pupils are now making good progress.
- The teaching of writing is improving. Teachers make the learning intentions for the lesson activity clear and ensure pupils know the steps they need to take to achieve them. This helps most pupils to make good progress. However teachers do not always ensure that lower attaining pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs take enough care when forming their letters correctly. For example, they are not made to avail themselves of the good prompts that are in the classroom. Neither do they always ensure that most-able pupils spell words they should know accurately.
- Classrooms are welcoming and are well equipped with books and vibrant displays. Teachers' effective use of 'working walls' to model the standards they expect from pupils, helps them understand how to set about tackling the tasks they are set and, in most cases, to complete them successfully.
- Teachers prepare resources well. In English lessons, teachers use resources such as 'flash cards' very effectively to help pupils understand time connectives, adverbs and adjectives so that they can write more ambitious and exciting sentences.
- The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Teachers teach key words and check pupils' understanding in lessons to ensure that they have understood the explanations given. Often these pupils are given extra support by teaching assistants to consolidate their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics is good and the school's use of practical resources to support learning is proving to be very effective. Staff are familiar with the expectations of the new curriculum and every effort is made to ensure that pupils understand number bonds and the four rules of number, and that they can apply these confidently in problem solving. Pupils enjoy mathematics and the most-able pupils are now demonstrating a greater fluency in solving problems and explaining their answers.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is consistently good and is proving to be instrumental in raising standards in reading. Pupils read frequently and well and clearly enjoy reading. Their favourite author is Roald Dahl because, according to a Year 2 pupil, he 'uses a good range of adjectives to make his characters come alive'. The daily focus on 'Everyone Reading in Class', together with the time allocated to specific adults to hear pupils read individually is helping pupils to develop secure reading skills across the school.
- The teaching of writing is good but some teachers do not always expect enough of the low attaining pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, specifically with regard to their spelling and handwriting.

- Homework is set regularly and pupils diligently complete it. The well-planned activities that teachers provide support pupils' learning in class well and help them to apply their learning in a variety of contexts. Parents are pleased with the amount of homework that pupils receive.
- Teachers mark work regularly but their marking is inconsistent because the school's marking policy has only recently been approved by the governors. The best marking gives pupils a clear indicator of what they have done wrong and what they need to improve. However, in some classes, teachers do not routinely pick up incorrect spellings. Sometimes marking is confined to general comments rather than being specific in telling pupils how to improve their work.
- Teachers' planning is thorough and demonstrates good knowledge of the new National Curriculum requirements. The recent training undertaken by teaching assistants is paying dividends as they play a key role in helping pupils learn. They deliver good quality catch-up programmes and are involved with the teachers in planning work so that pupils of all abilities can consolidate their learning and iron out any misconceptions.
- The teaching of disadvantaged pupils is good and the gap evident last year in reading, writing and mathematics has closed. This is due to the school's good use of targeted interventions and the effective work of teaching assistants, who are aware of where the pupils' barriers to learning lie and do all that they can to help overcome them.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is generally good and these pupils are well supported in small groupwork and on an individual level by well trained support staff. However in lessons some teachers do not expect enough of them in writing and occasionally let weak spelling and letter formation go unchecked.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good and has improved since the decline in standards after the last inspection in 2012. Children join the school with skills and abilities that, in individual cases, are often below those typical for their age particularly in language, communication and personal development. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. Moderated assessments by the local authority show that this year by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are broadly average.
- In spite of the learning difficulties many children face when they first enter the school, in the past year the number of children attaining a good level of development by the time that pupils enter Year 1 has doubled. Most children now leave the early years with a good level of development and this demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve.
- In 2014 standards were below national averages in reading and significantly below in writing. In mathematics they were in line with the national average. Boys' achievement was below that of the girls and pupils with English as an additional language were attaining standards below all pupils nationally.
- Standards are now rising swiftly. When the 2014 data was shared with staff an immediate plan of action was put in place to accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils. Staff worked hard as a team to address and reverse the previous pattern of underachievement. They have been successful. Current results, moderated by the local authority, show a much improved picture with approximately one third of pupils making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils progress well. Gaps between their attainment and other pupils in school in reading, writing and mathematics have now been closed. This is because funds have been targeted appropriately to provide the specific help they need and staff are able to identify and remove any barriers to learning.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs generally make good progress. They receive good support from the special educational needs coordinator and teaching assistants during whole class lessons, small group and individual work. This includes good support for early reading skills.

As noted earlier, their progress in writing is not as good as it is in reading and mathematics.

- The progress of the most-able pupils is good in reading and mathematics. However, teachers do not consistently pay enough attention to ensuring that these pupils spell correctly and do not always pick these errors up in their marking. This hinders pupils' progress in writing and prevents them from getting higher marks in the national tests.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make good progress in the early years and by the end of the Reception Year they are well prepared for the more formal work they will encounter in Year 1. The proportion of pupils who reach a good level of development under the new leadership of the school has doubled since last year, and is now in line with the latest available national average. These results have been moderated by the local authority for their accuracy.
- The quality of teaching is good but there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their early handwriting skills through play, both indoors and outdoors. Staff constantly strive to develop children's thinking, speaking and listening skills. Consequently, the children are eager to tell the teachers what they are learning, especially when describing the places they visited in the story of, 'We are going on a bear hunt'.
- Children make consistently good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the secure routines and safe practices used throughout the early years. As a result children feel secure in their learning. They behave well and their good behaviour continues throughout the school.
- Leadership and management of early years are good. Leaders monitor planning and teaching regularly and track the progress of different groups carefully, and offer immediate support if any child is falling behind.
- The outdoor and indoor environments are stimulating places of learning. Teachers plan all activities purposefully and ensure the children have good opportunities to use a wide range of resources in their learning. Teachers use story books effectively to help children familiarise themselves with the vocabulary used during adult-led activities.
- Adults keep detailed records of children's learning which are shared with parents so that they can help their children learn at home. The school arranges good quality courses for parents that are designed to teach them how to play with their children and help the children to develop their language.
- Children feel safe in the early years because teachers have established a purposeful learning environment and good links have been set up with local preschool providers. These enable staff to get an accurate picture of what children's starting points are when they join the Nursery and the Reception classes. Parents are pleased with what is on offer and they trust the staff to look after their children in a safe environment.

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	124035
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	456304

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pearl Harrison
Headteacher	Joanne Snook
Date of previous school inspection	22-23 May 2012
Telephone number	01283 564325
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Email address	Headteacher@grangeinfantsstaff.sch.uk

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