

St Lukes CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134353
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328896
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	477
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Hart
Headteacher	Jane Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	New Penkridge Road Cannock WS11 1HN
Telephone number	01543 510230
Fax number	01543 510231

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Luke's Primary is a larger-than-average school. It opened four years ago as an amalgamation of three small schools. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds with the remainder from a mixture of other ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a part-time Nursery and two Reception classes.

The on-site Farlea Kids Club (St Lukes) (Ofsted URN 218324) is privately managed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Lukes is a good school with some outstanding features. Achievement is good and pupils reach above average standards in Year 6. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also good. The school has improved rapidly since amalgamation under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher whose unrelenting drive to raise standards is shared enthusiastically by the staff.

Pupils grow into thoughtful, mature young people in the school's supportive atmosphere and their personal development is good. Their behaviour is exemplary and they are extremely polite to each other and to adults. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. Their attendance is average. Most pupils come to school very regularly, but minority have below average attendance records and the standards they reach are usually below those of their peers.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Typically, one wrote: 'My child has grown into a confident, enthusiastic and successful learner in the school's challenging environment'; another said, 'My daughter receives the highest level of support and care.'

In lessons, relationships are excellent. Teachers ensure the work they plan is relevant and interesting and, as a result, pupils enjoy lessons, work hard and make good progress. Occasionally teachers do not sustain a high level of challenge throughout the lesson and pupils' progress slows because they are not fully stretched. This means that teaching is good, rather than outstanding. The good curriculum provides a wealth of clubs and educational visits that broaden pupils' experience and add to their enjoyment of school. Pupils are cared for very well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive sensitive support. Pupils are given clear academic advice about how they can improve their work and care, guidance and support are good.

Subject leaders provide the headteacher with good support by taking responsibility for standards in their areas. However, leaders do not analyse closely the comprehensive data they have to identify which developments are the most successful. The record of improvements over the past four years shows the school has good capacity to get even better.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills and experiences at the expected levels. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes so that most reach above average standards when they start Year 1. Children make best progress in mathematics and literacy. Progress in creative development is good for girls and satisfactory for the boys. Children really enjoy school and make good progress in their personal development. They readily share toys and learning resources and are keen to co-operate and help each other.

Teaching is good. Teachers plan a wide range of lively and stimulating activities that engage children and accelerate their progress. There is a good balance between teacher-led activities and those that children choose for themselves. Some children are not always sure what they need to do when they are working independently. Children have ready access to the outdoor learning area and this is making a valuable contribution to their learning, especially in their gaining of independence. However, it is not as well resourced as the classrooms to develop,

for example, pupils' creative skills. The school has plans to extend this area and to provide additional resources.

Children's care is outstanding. They are very safe in both the classroom and outdoor learning area. Parents are very pleased with the quality of their child's education. They praise especially the good feedback they receive on their child's progress and the induction arrangements that mean children settle quickly and happily into the routines of school. Early Years Foundation Stage Leadership is good. The new leader has a clear vision for the future and has already made many improvements. For example, training has sharpened adults' assessments skills, which is helping them to plan children's next steps more precisely.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sustain a high level of challenge throughout the lesson to ensure pupils are fully challenged and make even better progress.
- Improve the attendance of the minority of pupils who have below average attendance records so that they reach the same standards as their peers.
- Ensure leaders analyse progress data rigorously to identify the success of developments and to pinpoint further areas where the school can become better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. This year children entered school with skills and knowledge expected for their age. Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception to reach standards that are above average. This good progress continues through Years 1 to 6. Pupils in Year 6, who started Year 3 with standards that were below average, have made good progress to reach above average standards. The progress of higher attaining pupils in English, which was slow last year, has improved and is now good. This is because teachers ensure that these pupils have especially challenging work. Girls' progress in mathematics is good but not as rapid as that of the boys. However, girls' progress is accelerating as they gain confidence in their ability to calculate accurately.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils reflect very maturely on their feelings and those of others. A clear understanding of right and wrong underpins their outstanding behaviour. This means learning always proceeds uninterrupted because, for example, pupils do not call out answers. Pupils co-operate extremely well in groups and very readily help and encourage each other. They have a well developed understanding of the diversity of British culture and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Pupils feel very safe in school because bullying is rare and the school quickly and effectively deals with any cases. Pupils take good care to ensure others come to no harm, for example in the play areas. Pupils have a clear understanding of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and most do their best to eat a balanced diet and take plenty of exercise. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school, their lessons, clubs and meeting their friends and this is reflected in the good attendance of most of them. Pupils with below average attendance do not attain as well as their peers. Pupils are very keen to take responsibility as monitors and as members of the school council. Pupils proudly told the inspectors about the book fairs they organise for pupils and

parents. Pupils take an active part in improving the local environment by organising anti-litter campaigns. Positive attitudes and above average standards mean that pupils are well prepared for secondary school and future employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers use resources, such as computers and educational games well to engage pupils and develop their learning. Pupils make best progress when they are researching and discussing ideas actively in small groups. Teachers make good use of their assessments to provide pupils with a good level of challenge. Sometimes pupils are not always fully challenged, for example, because the teacher talks for too long, which means pupils' rapid rate of progress is not sustained throughout the lesson. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum supports aspects of personal development well. For example, pupils have excellent opportunities to reflect on their feelings and those of others during lively assemblies. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding. Many educational visits to such places as museums and residential centres, a wealth of sports and other clubs, and many visitors to school widen pupils' horizons and raise their aspirations. The school has appropriate plans to provide pupils with more opportunities to write factual accounts and for girls to practise calculations to improve further their confidence in mathematics and to accelerate their progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers use their detailed knowledge of each child very well to provide a high standard of personal care. Pupils confidently approach staff with their problems knowing their worries will be quickly and effectively resolved. Several parents raised concerns about the school's safeguarding checks on volunteers that help in school. The team found that at the time of the inspection the checks on the suitability of all adults that come into regular contact with pupils in school are rigorous and that child protection arrangements and risk assessments are robust. Staff use accurate assessments of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to write effective individual learning plans that ensure these pupils make similar progress to their peers. Vulnerable pupils receive sensitive support. The school uses external agencies well to support pupil's welfare and education. For example, home visits by the education welfare officer are reducing the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Academic guidance is good. Marking and other feedback provide pupils with a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. Many teachers are checking that pupils are taking full note of this guidance although this is not yet the consistent practice of them all.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Robust monitoring and evaluation by the senior leadership team and subject leaders provide the school with an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Improvement plans are effective. For example, teaching and the school's checks on individual pupil progress have improved since the last inspection. Leaders do not analyse data effectively enough to measure the impact of its developments or to identify areas where the school can get even better.

The school is a harmonious and well-integrated society and provides valuable support for local people, such as single parent families. It is rapidly developing links with schools in the United States of America and Ghana and community cohesion is good. The school uses adults well to keep teaching groups small so that pupils get more individual help and this is accelerating their progress.

The governors work hard on the school's behalf. They are not afraid to challenge the school on its standards. Their expertise makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school, for example in health and safety.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

4 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Lukes C of E Primary School, Cannock WV11 1HN

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. We especially liked listening to your enthusiastic singing in assembly. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. We think St Lukes is a good school and it is continuing to improve. Here are some of the things we found out.

- You make a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Good teaching helps you make good progress in your lessons.
- In Year 6, standards are above average.
- You really enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.
- Your behaviour is outstanding.
- Most of you attend very regularly.
- You have good relationships with your teachers and you work hard for them.
- The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and many educational visits, which you enjoy.
- Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.
- You have a good understanding of how you can improve your work.
- The headteacher and adults are working hard to make sure the school gets better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

- Make sure teachers set work that is challenging enough throughout lessons so that you are really stretched and make even better progress.
- Improve the attendance of those of you who do not come to school as regularly as most other pupils so that you reach the same standards as they do.
- Make more use of information about your progress to check how well the school is improving and to pinpoint where further improvements are required.

You can help the school by continuing to behave so well, trying your best in lessons and attending regularly. We wish you all success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector