

St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Woden Road, Heath Town, Wolverhampton, WV10 0BB

Inspection dates 14–15 March 2013

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.

- Pupils regularly leave Year 6 with results that are above average in English and mathematics, reflecting the good progress they make as they move up the school. Their skills in reading are particularly good.
- Pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding achieve particularly well, as a result of effective use of the additional money to support their development.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs learn well as a result of carefully organised additional support.
- Teaching is typically good. Teachers display high expectations of how well their pupils can achieve, and their effective marking shows pupils exactly what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and appreciate the range of experiences and rewards that the school arranges for them.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, and they are polite and courteous to each other and to adults.
- Leaders and managers at all levels know the strengths of the school, and continually strive to make it even better.
- Teachers and teaching assistants value the support they receive in order to continually improve their skills.
- The atmosphere throughout the school is one of a happy family, where pupils are nurtured as individuals and feel safe, and where every pupil is expected to succeed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding, and the aspects of outstanding practice that do exist are not shared often enough with all staff.
- Staff do not make the most of pupils' curiosity by developing their research skills in lessons.
- Some pupils are not helped to make the transition from Reception to Year 1 as effectively as they could be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons, of which four were jointly observed with senior leaders. In addition, several other short visits to lessons were made.
- Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Informal and formal conversations were held with pupils, and a range of pupils' work was looked at.
- Inspectors examined documentation from the school about pupils' attainment and progress, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of communication with parents during the inspection, and 17 responses to the questionnaire that staff were invited to complete. There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, for this to be considered during the inspection.

Inspection team

Clare Saunders, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kerin Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school, where most pupils are from minority ethnic groups and four in ten speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving during the school year is higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for certain groups of pupils, is much higher than the national average. In this school the funding applies mainly to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and a small number pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported by school action, school action plus, or a statement of special educational needs are broadly average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school is in a 'hard' federation with another primary school, which means that the two schools share the same executive headteacher and governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding, so pupils make rapid progress throughout the school, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their skills of enquiry and problem-solving in lessons
 - ensuring that the learning activities teachers plan in Key Stage 1 build effectively on the skills and knowledge that pupils have acquired during their time in the nursery and Reception
 - routinely giving staff the chance to watch each other in action, in order to share the existing outstanding practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills and knowledge that are below the levels expected for their age. By the end of Year 2 their test results are close to national averages. At the end of Year 6 pupils consistently achieve results that are above average.
- Children make good progress in the nursery and Reception, especially in developing their communication and language skills, and their social interaction with others. This good progress is continued through Key Stages 1 and 2, although some learning time is lost as pupils move into Year 1 and adapt to the curriculum in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils who are supported through the pupil premium make good progress throughout the school. Pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals left Year 6 in 2012 half a term ahead of their classmates in English, and nearly two terms ahead in mathematics. This is a result of the careful allocation of the pupil premium to provide additional small group and individual tuition, and extra resources to ensure these pupils are fully supported to learn.
- The way in which pupils develop their reading is a particular strength. Phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they make) is taught very effectively to small groups, and this is carefully organised so that pupils learn quickly and achieve well. Pupils have a desire to read often, and they are rewarded in assemblies for the number of books they have read.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress as a result of support and tuition that is closely matched to their individual needs. Consequently they learn well throughout the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in the vast majority of lessons. Sometimes it is outstanding, for example in the way phonics is taught, and in Year 2.
- In most lessons teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan a range of interesting learning activities that pupils respond to with enthusiasm. Teachers have high expectations of how quickly their pupils can learn skills and develop their knowledge and understanding, and the pace of learning is brisk. Information about how much the pupils have previously learned is used effectively to ensure that pupils tackle tasks will help them to learn well.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support the learning of individuals and small groups. They are skilled and know their pupils well. They are enthusiastic and work as a team with the class teachers to ensure that pupils' achievement is good.
- Marking of pupils' work is regular and thorough. Teachers' comments are encouraging and generally indicate what the pupils need to do in order to improve their work for next time. Pupils know their targets and take pride in their written work, which is well presented.
- Sometimes learning tasks set in Key Stage 1 do not enable pupils to continue the good progress they made in the nursery and Reception, as the tasks set do not always build on the styles of learning that children have been used to.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are courteous and polite to each other, and to adults. They are especially keen to welcome visitors and are very enthusiastic about their school. There is a happy atmosphere in all aspects of school life.
- Pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes and at break times is good. They consider others and enjoy playing with the wide range of equipment that the school has provided. The school employs sports coaches to play with the pupils at lunchtime, and pupils are very appreciative of this.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in variety of situations, such as on the road and when using the internet. They are aware of the different types of bullying, and are confident that on the rare occasions when it happens in the school, the staff deal with it effectively. They feel there is always someone to talk to if they feel concerned.
- Pupils enjoy being part of the school community. They take an active role through the school council in making their opinions known, and relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities such as being 'playground buddies' to the younger pupils.
- In lessons pupils know the standards of behaviour expected of them, and respond well. They are keen to learn and to please the teacher, and demonstrate the positive social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of their education that the school promotes. However, they do not always have enough opportunities to work things out for themselves and develop their investigative and enquiry skills as their learning is often directed too much by the teacher.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance, and this is now around the national average for primary schools. The pupils enjoy receiving recognition in assemblies for their good attendance.
- The school's own questionnaire and the views gathered by parents during the inspection support these positive views of behaviour.

The leadership and management are good

- The inspirational leadership of the executive headteacher and the head of school, supported by highly effective middle leaders, has been instrumental in the drive to continually improve the school. Leaders throughout the school have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas to develop, and their effective actions to bring about improvement have led to pupils' achievement being consistently good.
 - Pupils enjoy a wide range of memorable experiences that develop their social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness. These include trips out that enhance the pupils' understanding of their learning, and they get the chance to take part in residential visits.
 - Leaders have a thorough system for monitoring the performance of teachers. Each teacher and teaching assistant has targets that are linked closely to pupils' achievement. They are reviewed with the governing body each term, so that appropriate training, support and praise can be provided. This means that all staff feel supported in developing their skills, and are aware of what is expected of them. However, leaders do not yet make the most of opportunities to share the elements of outstanding practice that exist in the school regularly with all staff.
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- The local authority monitors the school's performance, how well it judges itself and the areas prioritised for school improvement on a regular basis as a matter of routine. The local authority recognises the good strengths in leadership at all levels in the school.
 - The pupil premium is used effectively to boost eligible pupils' achievement in lessons, especially in developing their reading and language skills, and to support their good behaviour in all aspects of school life.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works as a team with school leaders to routinely and rigorously evaluate how well the school is performing. Pupils' achievement is discussed regularly and the challenging targets set for improvement are linked to a good understanding of the quality of teaching in each year group. Governors ask challenging questions about all aspects of school life, and they and the school leaders appreciate the openness with which these discussions are held. Governors visit the school regularly, and have links with specific areas and subjects. They manage finances effectively and allocate the pupil premium to where it best serves the pupils it supports. They ensure that all legal responsibilities for safeguarding are met.
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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	104361
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	402943

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Whitehouse
Executive Headteacher	Wayne Downing
Date of previous school inspection	16 July 2008
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