

Old Church C of E Primary School

School Street, Darlaston, WS10 8DL

Inspection dates 1–2 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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' progress has improved and it is now consistently good.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. They make good progress because teachers focus on developing their skills with a range of fun activities which children enjoy.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers ensure lessons are interesting so pupils are engaged in learning.
- Pupils behave well around the school and in lessons. Their positive attitudes to learning support their good progress.
- Pupils take on a range of responsibilities including 'happy helpers' who are trained to support other pupils who need help.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average.
- The headteacher's high expectations, well supported by other leaders, managers and governors, have ensured that teaching and achievement have improved and are now good.
- Governance has improved. Governors are very supportive of the school and are now able to question and challenge in more detail to ensure continuous improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Teaching is good rather than outstanding so pupils do not always make rapid progress. Marking in books does not always give pupils clear information about how to improve their work which is then followed up by teachers.
- Teachers occasionally do not have high enough expectations for the most able pupils or set them challenging work that will help them reach higher levels.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 19 lessons or part-lessons including one observation carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with two groups of pupils in meetings and with others around the school and in lessons.
- Pupils' work in lessons was looked at along with work they have completed over time in their books. Inspectors also heard pupils read, attended an assembly and observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and in the lunch hall.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, a local authority representative and the Chair of the Governing Body with four other governors.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers at the start of the day as they brought their children to school and considered the 24 responses to the online survey, Parent View. The completed questionnaires from 13 staff were also reviewed.
- The inspection team looked at the school's work, its review of its own performance and plans for the future, minutes of meetings of the governing body, documents relating to the management of the performance of staff, and behaviour, attendance and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steven Cartlidge

Additional Inspector

Aileen King

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are White British with others from a range of different backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A new headteacher took up her post in September 2012 and a new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in November 2011. A new numeracy coordinator commenced in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding overall and pupils make more rapid progress by:
 - marking books so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work and teachers then following this up
 - teachers having higher expectations of the work set for the most able pupils to help them reach the higher attainment levels.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Progress has improved and pupils now make consistently good progress throughout the school. Evidence from the school's own data and pupils' books shows that pupils achieve well.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age in all areas of development. Staff plan a range of interesting activities which engage children and help them to develop their skills in a fun way. For example, children in Nursery enjoyed exploring and finding out for themselves what symmetrical patterns appear in nature and used mirrors to investigate the symmetry of butterflies. Although attainment remains below average at the end of the Reception Year, children make good progress.
- Early reading skills are well developed. The results of the Year 1 phonics (letters and their sounds) check improved in 2013 and were above average. Pupils say that they enjoy their reading and they like different books, especially storybooks. They attempt reading more difficult words and are able to correct these if they get them wrong. They understand the meaning of what they read.
- Pupils' writing skills are also developed well and pupils get opportunities in different subjects, such as history, to use their skills to write in different formats. Mathematics skills are also being improved and there is an increased focus on pupils developing the basic skills in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division more quickly.
- Progress has accelerated in the last two years and although attainment remained below average at Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics, and average in writing in 2013, these pupils made good progress addressing previous underachievement.
- Pupils who receive support from pupil premium funding receive extra help in lessons and as individuals and in small groups. There is a wide range of extra help including literacy, numeracy and specialist language support. The school carefully identifies what extra help will make the most difference and monitors this to make sure these pupils make more rapid progress. Progress is improving for these pupils and gaps are narrowing. In the national tests in 2013 these pupils were half a term behind others in reading and mathematics and half a term ahead in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive extra help in lessons and small groups and make good progress. Where specific needs are identified the school provides specialist help to help these pupils make good progress and catch up with others. This successful work demonstrates the school's successful drive to ensure equality of opportunity. Pupils from all backgrounds achieve well.
- The most able pupils make good progress although on occasions expectations are not always high enough and the work is not hard enough for these pupils to make rapid progress so they can reach the highest levels.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in a wide range of subjects, including literacy and numeracy, is consistently good. Pupils are engaged and motivated in lessons because activities are interesting.
- Lessons are well organised and routines support pupils' learning. When pupils change between activities very little time is wasted. Pupils think carefully about their work and try hard to use their knowledge to answer questions and apply this information to work out new things. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 French lesson pupils showed great perseverance in tackling a problem which the teacher helped pupils to work out by asking them questions using information they already knew.
- Teaching assistants work well with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to help them with their work and to take a full part in lessons. Sometimes pupils have easier work which helps them to progress in their learning and the teaching assistants skilfully help

pupils to think about their learning by asking questions.

- Pupils have opportunities to think about how well they have done in their work and to indicate their understanding. However, although books are marked, teachers do not regularly give pupils next steps in their learning to help them improve their work and follow these up later to ensure that pupils consolidate this aspect of their learning.
- More-able pupils are given work which engages them in learning although on occasions the highest levels of challenge are not always there as work is a little easy and does not support pupils to make more rapid progress and reach the highest levels.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children are encouraged to develop skills in all areas of development. For example, reception children learnt about a line of symmetry and the patterns they can create with colour, which they enjoyed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well around the school, in the playground and in the lunch hall. They are helpful to each other and welcoming to visitors. They are consistently polite and courteous. The school is effective in promoting positive relationships and ensuring discrimination is not tolerated.
- Pupils take on a range of responsibilities to prepare them for their future lives and to help others in the school. They take part in the school council, a group of pupils who have been specially trained to help and support other pupils wear 'green jackets' so that they are easily identified and another group of pupils look after the school's guinea pigs and rabbits.
- Pupils think that behaviour is good. They like the rewards that they receive for behaving well and trying hard, including stickers, house points, and the headteacher's tea and prize box. One pupil was very pleased to speak about how proud she was to be rewarded for having good manners as she dined on the golden table at lunchtime with her friend.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. They know about different types of bullying and that name calling of any kind should not happen because it is hurtful. They say that bullying of any kind is rare and school records confirm that their view is accurate.
- The school works well with different agencies and the police to make sure pupils know how to keep themselves safe such as when on the internet. The very large majority of parents and carers responding to the online survey said their child feels safe in school and that behaviour is good. All staff who completed questionnaires said that behaviour was well managed.
- The school has focused on improving attendance and has worked hard with families to improve attendance. This has been successful, as attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy headteacher and senior team, has high expectations and has ensured that teaching and achievement have improved so that they are now good. All staff who completed questionnaires are confident in the leadership of the headteacher.
- Subject leaders have been supported to develop in their roles and now take an active part in leading improvements in their areas and check that these make a difference.
- Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. The headteacher and senior staff know the school well and what needs to improve further. Plans for improvement focus on appropriate priorities with clear steps for improvement that are monitored regularly.
- The management of the performance of staff is thorough. Staff receive feedback on how to improve their teaching which is effective. Underperformance has been challenged to ensure

teaching improves and pupils make better progress. All staff were positive about the professional development they receive.

- The school now spends more time on literacy and numeracy so these are developed more fully than at the time of the previous inspection. Literacy is developed in other subjects where pupils can apply the writing skills they have learnt. Other subjects are taught through a topic approach and the school is planning to develop skills through subjects more fully with the new curriculum from September. Music is a particular strength of the school. A wide range of musical instruments is taught and there is a highly successful school choir.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Spirituality is promoted in assemblies and pupils think about right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to discuss moral and ethical issues and be involved in debates. They are encouraged to work well with others. Diversity and the element of being unique are valued in the school.
- The school has used its funding to employ a sports coach to deliver high-quality physical education lessons to all year groups and to work with staff to develop their skills. New after-school clubs have been introduced. Pupils have the opportunity to swim and have lessons with a specialist swimming coach. Dance and cheerleading sessions have been introduced to encourage more pupils to take part in physical activity and develop more healthy lifestyles. Pupils' high achievement in sport can be seen with the success of the tag-rugby team who have not lost a match this season and won the local tournament.
- The local authority has provided effective support to monitor improvements in the school and provide training for teachers and worked with senior leaders to improve quality assurance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors arranged for an external review of themselves and have acted on the outcomes. They understand the published data on the school and know how well the school compares to others nationally. They know how good the quality of teaching is and how this has improved. They receive updates on the management of the performance of staff and are aware that only staff who teach well are rewarded. They know what support has been provided to improve teaching and to address underperformance in the past. They receive updates on data and question senior leaders about the difference being made, including for pupils supported by pupil premium funding. They attend regular training and ensure statutory duties are met including for safeguarding.

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	104224
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	431156

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bonhomme
Headteacher	Davina Clacy
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 April 2012
Telephone number	0121 568 6329
Fax number	0121 526 5973
Email address	dclacy@old-church.walsall.sch.uk

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