

# St John's Primary School

Mortimer Road, , Kenilworth, CV8 1FS

**Inspection dates** 12–13 February 2014

|                                |                      |              |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3        |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good         | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Outstanding  | 1        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good         | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide a clear sense of direction for the school. They successfully lead improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement because they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The quality of teaching has steadily improved since the previous inspection and is now good.
- Pupils are making good progress across the school and are on track to reach above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those eligible for the pupil premium and the most able pupils achieve well.
- Behaviour is outstanding and pupils feel very safe and very well cared for in this school.
- Pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning and their good communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills prepare them well for secondary school.
- Staff morale is high. All staff with leadership responsibilities contribute positively to school improvement and feel well supported in their roles.
- Lessons and other activities engage the pupils' interests, encourage them to use their initiative in their learning and strongly promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school and continually challenge the headteacher to improve the quality of provision.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to ensure that all pupils reach the highest possible standards across the school.
- Though rapidly improving, standards in writing and mathematics are not yet as high as in reading.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons, mostly accompanied by the headteacher or deputy headteacher, and observed a range of other activities, including an African drumming lesson and a parents' afternoon.
- Meetings and discussions were held with staff, groups of pupils, governors and a representative of the local authority. The inspectors took into account the 27 responses to the Parent View questionnaires that were available, the responses to the school's most recent parents' questionnaire and comments by a number of parents and carers spoken to around the school.
- The inspectors heard pupils read in the classroom and looked at the work in their books. They examined a range of documents including safeguarding policies and procedures, the school's view of its own performance, lesson plans and records of the progress of past and current pupils.

## Inspection team

Peter Kerr, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Amarjit Cheema

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- St John's is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding, which in this school is allocated for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are identified at the school action plus level or with statements of special educational needs, is similar to that found nationally.
- Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and nearly all the pupils speak English as a first language.
- The school meets current floor standards, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Children's Centre on the site and after-school provision are inspected and reported upon separately.

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

- Make more teaching outstanding and raise standards in writing and mathematics further by:
  - helping all teaching staff to develop the high level questioning skills needed to challenge pupils even more
  - making sure that all pupils know what to do next at each stage in lessons
  - extending opportunities for leaders in English and mathematics to observe lessons and support learning throughout the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well. Records of current pupils' progress and samples of their work show that they are making at least the expected progress each half-term and in most classes making substantially more than this. As a result each year-group is on track to reach above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils who left the school in 2013 made below average progress from Year 2 to Year 6 because of disruptions to teaching. They made quicker progress in their final year under more effective teaching, but this was not enough to make up all the lost ground.
- Standards in reading are higher than in writing because pupils have been making more rapid progress in reading over time. However, this gap is now closing rapidly because pupils are so highly motivated and supported to improve their writing and mathematics.
- Children join the Nursery with skills typically at the level expected for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their social, language and communication skills, and enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment.
- The results of the Year 1 screening check in phonics (linking letters and sounds) were better than those of most schools in 2013 and were an improvement on the previous year. Attainment at the end of Year 2 rose from average in 2012 to above average in 2013. Pupils currently in Key Stage 1 are making good progress and on course for above average attainment by the end of Year 2.
- Learning is typically good because lessons cater for the full range of ability in each class. Pupils made good progress when worked at tasks that make them think hard with just the right level of support from staff. Learning sometimes slows when pupils are unsure of next steps and have to await further instructions.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They read widely for pleasure and use a range of sources, including the internet, to research information. They communicate their thoughts and ideas very effectively through both the spoken and written word.
- Pupils use their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills very effectively during theme-day activities. For example, outstanding progress was seen in reading and writing when Year 2 pupils worked very hard and really enjoyed writing stories for their parents. They read their pieces confidently and competently to the class in practice for when their parents were able to listen.
- Outstanding learning was seen in Key Stage 2, when pupils worked on practical projects based on the countries they were studying. The pupils carried out their own research and used their initiative to improve their work, making good use of mathematics as well as literacy skills.
- Learning in mathematics is good because pupils' tasks challenge them to solve problems. Lower attaining pupils receive good support while the most able pupils learn well because their tasks make them think hard for themselves.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium are now making the same or better progress than other pupils in the same year group because of effective targeted support. The gap between these

and other pupils is therefore closing. It has reduced from over a term behind in Year 1 to less than half a term in Year 6, which is considerably less than the gap in English and mathematics for leavers in 2013. The strongest picture is for the current term as the school has become increasingly effective in meeting the specific needs of these pupils.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are currently making good progress because the support they receive is now more effective. Previously some of these pupils had not made enough progress because their individual needs were not being so well catered for, and some still have ground to make up.

## The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good and is sometimes outstanding. Teachers plan and deliver lessons that build on what pupils already know and work effectively with teaching assistants to support pupils' learning as they work.
- Teaching was outstanding in a Year 1 writing lesson because teachers and teaching assistants questioned pupils closely about their work to clarify any misunderstandings and stretch all the pupils, including the most able.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Lessons are planned effectively for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are encouraged to develop independence and to co-operate with other as they play. A suitable balance is struck between teaching the children directly and helping them to learn as they play.
- Phonics, spelling and grammar are taught well, and teachers help pupils to continually improve their writing through advice in lessons and good marking in books. They insist that mistakes are corrected and that writing becomes neater and more grammatically correct.
- By providing regular opportunities for pupils to write at length for a clear practical purpose, teachers motivate pupils to produce more interesting writing. The many displays around the school inspire pupils to write well.
- The additional support provided for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and a whole range of additional support is provided for any pupil or groups of pupils who are falling behind. The impact of interventions is now regularly checked and adjusted to sustain good progress. This has improved pupils' self-esteem and is speeding up their progress.
- Teaching makes a strong contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In lessons and assemblies, teachers use stories extremely well to give pupils an insight into different cultures and understand that they share common human values. For example, following a story in an outstanding assembly in Key Stage 1, pupils were able to explain the links between the school's values and Buddhist principles.
- In some lessons, the purpose of activities is not clear enough to some of the pupils in order for them to know what to do next. As a consequence their learning slows.
- On occasions the staff supporting the most able pupils in mathematics do not have enough skill and confidence to ask suitable challenging questions to make the pupils think even harder.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are confident and polite when interacting with adults around the school and very kind and considerate to each other. Behaviour around the school is impeccable and distracting behaviour is extremely rare.
- Staff support pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties well to manage their behaviour very successfully within lessons. They withdraw pupils for individual support only when absolutely necessary.
- As a result of such highly effective strategies, some pupils who had previously found it very difficult to behave well and be considerate to others have been observed being spontaneously helpful and kind to younger pupils in the playground.
- The school's values and aspirations, which are prominently displayed, deeply influence the pupils' attitudes. Year 2 pupils, for example, could relate the messages in stories from China to the school's values. One parent said how impressed he was that his son could spontaneously and enthusiastically explain aspects of the school's values on their walk to school.
- Pupils' are exceptionally enthusiastic learners. They love collaborating with each other on projects and are very eager to share what they learn with each other and with a wider audience. A number of pupils readily responded to requests for further information, for example about Scandinavian place names in Year 6 and simple Russian words in Year 5.
- Pupils also relish a challenge and show perseverance. This helps them develop academically. For example, Year 6 pupils who were posed an additional challenge during an algebra lesson provided a complete and accurate explanation the next day of how they had solved the problem, thereby reaching a well-above average understanding of the subject for their age.
- During the parents' afternoon pupils demonstrated what they had learned to members of their families. The high levels of motivation these activities generated helped them to work hard at improving their communication skills. The pupils showed that they really knew what they were talking about and could explain things clearly to others.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils know that the staff value them as individuals and this makes them feel very safe in school. They have an excellent understanding about how to reduce risks to themselves in a range of situations, including when using the internet.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides very clear, firm leadership and, in the words of one of the governors, 'brings out the best in governors, staff and pupils'.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear strategy for how to raise achievement and further improve the quality of teaching. The positive responses in the staff survey confirm that they fully support this vision.
- The school development plan is sharply focused on improving pupils' achievement with well-

defined and realistic timescales. Accurate analysis and decisive action by leaders ensured that progress was rapidly improved following the dip in attainment and progress in 2013. Leaders also recognised that progress in writing was slower than in reading and took steps to narrow this gap. The work in pupils' books confirms that these measures have significantly accelerated progress in writing.

- A much improved system for tracking pupils' progress has enabled senior leaders to better analyse how well individual and groups of pupils are progressing. This means that additional support for pupils is more effective, particularly for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Information about pupils' progress has also been used well to allocate the pupil premium resources to close the gap in attainment between these and other pupils.
- Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and provide clear advice to teachers about how to improve teaching. The headteacher has shown great skill in handling cases where this support has not brought teaching up to the required standard. This has enabled new appointments to be made and has substantially improved teaching and management expertise.
- Subject leaders in English and mathematics are becoming increasingly effective. They provide models of good practice through their own teaching, but have not yet had enough time and support to ensure that teaching is equally effective in their subjects throughout the school.
- Relationships with parents are strong. Newsletters are regular and informative and parents are invited into school to see what their children have been learning and share in their successes. The parents' responses to Parent View and a recent school survey showed that they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.
- The headteacher has led a re-vitalisation of the curriculum to include greater use of outside expertise, such as the highly effective African Drumming teachers, and innovative ways of displaying the pupils' work and celebrating their successes. The well-attended parents' afternoon that took place during the inspection was a vibrant example of this.
- The additional sport funding (provided to all primary schools) has been used well to improve the pupils' health and wellbeing. Physical education specialists are employed to coach pupils and help improve staff expertise. Sports and dance clubs have been extended and provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to participate and excel. Increased interest and participation confirm the success of these measures.
- Arrangements for keeping pupils safe meet all current statutory requirements. School staff work very effectively with outside agencies to ensure that pupils who are most vulnerable receive a high level of support.
- The local authority provided effective support for the headteacher during the year following the previous inspection. The school currently uses the services of an independent improvement adviser in addition to whatever support the local authority is now able to provide.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Governors are very well informed about key aspects of the schools' work. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to senior leaders.
- The governors' understanding of how well pupils are achieving has greatly improved since the previous inspection. Governors use the available data on pupils' achievement to compare the school's performance to that of other schools.
- Governors have improved their contribution to school improvement by joint visits with staff aimed at identifying specific areas that could be improved. This has led, for example, to more effective use of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning across the ability spectrum.
- The governing body makes sure that the contribution of staff to raising pupils' achievements and improving the management of the school is linked to the pay they receive.
- The budget is managed effectively and governors are aware of how the pupil premium is being spent to support eligible pupils' progress and raise their attainment.



## 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> | 130870       |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Warwickshire |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 431159       |

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>                     | Community               |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3-11                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 239                     |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body      |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Trevor Martin           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Darren Barrow           |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 19 June 2012            |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01926 854450            |
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