

Glenthorne Community Primary School

Glenthorne Drive, Cheslyn Hay, Walsall, WS6 7BZ

Inspection dates 17–18 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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 achieve well because teaching is typically good and some is outstanding.
- Standards in Year 6 have risen, and more pupils than in the past are working at the higher Levels 5 and 6, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress across the school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have focused successfully on improving teaching and pupils' learning.
- Rigorous checks on teaching and good use of training and support for teachers have improved classroom practice and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- The school gives pupils an interesting range of subjects, topics and experiences which help them to enjoy school.
- Pupils are polite and behaviour in lessons and around school is good.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. They are well looked after by staff.
- The strong staff team, led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, has the drive and skills to make the school even better.
- Governance has improved and is good. The governing body knows the school well and provides high levels of support and challenge which ensure that teaching and achievement continue to improve rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Pupils' progress in writing, particularly that of the more able, is not consistently good because they are not given enough opportunities to practice their grammar and punctuation skills or check the spelling of words.
- Pupils' handwriting is not always neat.
- Marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work; they often lack opportunities to correct mistakes, which restrict how well their work improves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. They visited 14 lessons, including three shared observations with the headteacher and one with the deputy headteacher. Playtimes and lunchtimes were also observed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other staff, pupils, members of the governing body, the local leader of education who has been supporting the school, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses to the school's own survey of the views of parents. Inspectors also sought the views of parents through informal discussions at the start of the school day.
- The views expressed in the seven questionnaires completed by staff were taken into account.
- Inspectors checked pupils' written work in a range of subjects and listened to pupils reading.
- They looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation and plan for improvement; information on pupils' progress and attainment; school policies; records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour; and teachers' planning of learning.

Inspection team

Helen Morrison, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Turner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Most pupils come from a White British background and few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (extra government funding to support the learning of particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and looked after children) is average.
- Children attend the Nursery class in the mornings only.
- Additional 'wrap-around' care for Nursery-aged children is provided in the afternoon.
- The school operates before- and after-school clubs which are managed by the governing body.
- Since its previous inspection, the school has received support from a local leader of education from Whitgreave Primary School.
- There have been several staff changes since the previous inspection. A new senior leader joined the school in September 2013, together with two newly qualified staff.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to be outstanding and raise attainment in writing, particularly for more-able pupils, by:
 - sharing outstanding practice in teaching so all teachers have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their grammar and punctuation skills
 - making sure that all pupils use neat handwriting and know how to check their spelling is accurate.
- Improve pupils' progress by:
 - making sure teachers' comments on pupils' work clearly show them how to improve
 - providing more time for pupils to correct their mistakes so they practise the skills they are learning and make better progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is, currently, better than at the time of the previous inspection because of leaders' strong and successful focus on improving teaching. The school's current data analysing pupils' progress and attainment and work in pupils' books show that attainment is rising and that the progress of pupils throughout the school is accelerating.
- Children's knowledge, skills and understanding when they join the school in Nursery and Reception are broadly typical for their age, although skills in reading, writing and mathematics are below those expected. Children achieve well in these areas and in their personal development because they enjoy exciting activities that capture their interest. As a result, they reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2013, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were close to the national average. Following staff changes, pupils are currently making faster progress in Year 1 and are reaching standards above those typical for their age. The current group of Year 2 pupils started the year with skills well below those usually found at that age, particularly in their knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics). Highly effective teaching has speeded up their progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. As a result, pupils have caught up, although the school predicts achievement as likely to be average this year.
- In 2013, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics, and weakest in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. The school has dealt with poor teaching effectively and taken positive action to improve pupils' attainment. Observations during the inspection and assessment information show that, in all subjects, most pupils are making good progress and standards of attainment are rising.
- More-able Year 6 pupils are producing work at the higher levels, particularly in reading and mathematics, because they are given work that is challenging. However, weak grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting skills, resulting from poor progress in previous years, lower their attainment in writing.
- In the past, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs made slower progress than that of other pupils. The school is ensuring that they receive well-targeted support quickly and they are making progress which is as good as that of other pupils.
- Pupils who benefit from support from additional funding (pupil premium) have accelerated their progress with extra adult help. In Year 6 in 2013, eligible pupils were six months behind others' attainment in writing and two years behind in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. These gaps in attainment have all closed in the current Year 6. In 2013, eligible pupils reached similar standards to other pupils in mathematics and this has been maintained in 2014. Pupils supported by the pupil premium are currently achieving as well as other pupils and making good progress.
- The primary sports funding has been used well. It provides training for staff, particularly in dance and gymnastics. New resources and the sports partnership with the local high school are used effectively. Improved teaching as a result of staff training has raised pupils' attainment, and pupils say they enjoy sporting events and competitions with other local schools.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching and its impact on learning have improved considerably since the previous inspection as a result of the successful actions taken by the headteacher, senior leaders and governors.
- Discussions with pupils and work in their books show that teaching has been typically good for the last year, with some that is outstanding. Pupils are better challenged than in recent years. Consequently, all pupils at both key stages are making rapid gains in their knowledge and understanding.
- In Nursery and Reception, teaching is, sometimes, of an exceptionally high quality and makes sure learning is exciting and fun and children are, consequently, making rapid progress. For example, children in Nursery were fascinated when examining the scales, teeth and tails of different fish and extended their understanding of nature and words very well. Children in Reception were challenged to use their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes when using wooden blocks to build structures modelled on famous buildings, such as the Parthenon, and effectively improved their spatial awareness.
- The teaching of reading and the sounds letters make (phonics) was seen to be of high quality and all groups of pupils make good progress. Phonics teaching has improved and makes sure that pupils learn early reading skills through blending sounds together. As a result, pupils read unfamiliar words confidently.
- Mathematics is well taught. Pupils' work shows that they make good progress in this subject, especially in developing their basic number and problem-solving skills.
- Progress in writing, particularly for more-able pupils, is not as rapid as in reading and mathematics because pupils lack spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting skills. These skills have been less well taught in the past and pupils have had insufficient opportunities to practise them. Better teaching is currently prompting improved attainment in writing. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, evocative images of bomb damage and the sound of explosions stimulated all pupils to make rapid progress in the increasingly demanding tasks they were given.
- Parents rightly think their children are taught well, and pupils say that teachers make learning interesting and fun.
- Skilled teaching assistants work well to provide timely support to pupils with specific needs, such as disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those supported by additional funding. As a result, these pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates.
- Teaching in the additional 'wrap-around' sessions for Nursery-aged children each afternoon helps the children enjoy opportunities to use their imagination when playing together.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked. However, teachers' comments do not always identify what pupils should do to improve. Sometimes pupils are not given enough time to correct their work or respond to teachers' guidance and this restricts how well their work improves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are keen to learn because lessons are interesting and engaging. Pupils usually respond immediately to teachers' instructions and move between activities without any fuss. They concentrate well in lessons, although very occasionally during

the inspection, a few had to be reminded to get on with their work.

- Behaviour at lunchtime, around the school and on the playground, is good. Pupils are polite and courteous. Parents, pupils and staff think that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils play an active role in school and enjoy taking responsibility, for example, acting as prefects and belonging to the pupil-leadership team.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Leaders make sure the school building is secure and staff are only appointed following rigorous checks on their suitability. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation, including the importance of being safe on the internet, and of different forms of bullying and why they are wrong. They say there is no bullying, although should it occur, they are confident it would be dealt with effectively by the school staff.
- Attendance has improved and is above average. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years. Pupils who have been temporarily excluded have been helped to manage their behaviour better when they return to school so the number of exclusions has reduced.
- Pupils who attend the before- and after-school clubs enjoy stimulating, interesting and constructive activities.

The leadership and management are good

- A relentless drive for improvement, led by the headteacher and shared fully by all leaders and members of the governing body, has successfully improved teaching and raised standards.
- All staff and governors share a determination to move the school forward. Their determination, together with strong teamwork and the impressive track record of better teaching and achievement, demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.
- The school's view of itself is accurate and staff training is carefully linked to priorities. Accurate self-evaluation has resulted in direct action to improve teaching and raise standards. Newly qualified teachers are supported well so they gain confidence and develop their skills. However, the outstanding teaching found in the school is not always shared with other teachers as well as it could be. Consequently, some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Senior staff check the quality of teaching regularly and thoroughly and follow up any weaknesses. The headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure that teachers' performance is closely linked to pupils' progress, school targets and salary progression.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is particularly effective in ensuring well-planned activities enthuse and motivate children so they enjoy learning and make good progress. Leaders responsible for subjects have been given helpful training and lead their areas well.
- The subjects and topics that pupils learn capture their interests. These learning opportunities promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures and have a broad, informed view of the world. They work well together and show respect for the opinions and ideas of others.

- The school's leaders, including governors, are committed to making sure all pupils are well cared for and included in all school activities. There are suitable policies and procedures for tackling discrimination should it arise. There is no discrimination in the school.

- The local authority has provided effective support for school leaders through termly visits by an adviser, which help to evaluate the school's performance. The work of the local leader of education has been instrumental in helping to improve the quality of teaching.

- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors monitor performance data on pupils' progress and attainment carefully and visit the school regularly to watch lessons, look at pupils' work and talk to pupils and staff about learning activities. As a result, they have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, the progress of different groups of pupils and how the school is doing compared to other schools nationally. Governors monitor the school's finances carefully and check regularly that the pupil premium funding is having the intended impact. They are fully involved in setting performance targets for the headteacher as well as monitoring the effectiveness of targets set for teachers to raise the achievement of pupils. They ensure that teaching effectiveness relates to pay and promotions. Governors undertake regular training to help them fulfil their roles successfully. They make sure that the school meets all its legal requirements, including ensuring that safeguarding policies and procedures are updated and reviewed regularly.

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	124162
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	442569

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debra Martin
Headteacher	Simon Barker
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2012
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