

Great Wood Community Primary School

Vicarage Road, Upper Tean, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST10 4LE

Inspection dates 24–25 November 2015

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a rapidly improving school, which is flourishing under the soft federation arrangements with Moorlands Primary Federation.
- The strengthened capacity in leadership and governance has ensured that teachers are well prepared in implementing recent changes in the ways subjects are taught and pupils' learning is assessed.
- Purposeful leadership has brought about a culture of high expectations, resulting in all groups of pupils making good progress from their starting points. Parents are delighted with the gains that their children make in learning.
- Governors show a steely determination to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well. There is no gap between these pupils and all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is improving because teachers receive effective professional development and coaching from senior leaders.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work well together on tasks in lessons. They behave well and are courteous and polite.
- Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep safe due to the school's rigorous systems of safeguarding.
- Learning opportunities both in lessons and after school are vibrant and exciting. Pupils enjoy learning and as a result attendance has improved and is above average.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start and are generally well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support that they receive from well-trained teaching assistants.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average in Key Stage 2 and pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children in the early years struggle with forming their letters and numbers correctly.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils do not present their work neatly enough.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully familiar with how to use the school's new tracking systems to identify any underperforming pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the early years by ensuring that children are given more opportunities to form their letters and numbers correctly.
- Increase the standard of presentation in pupils' exercise books in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that:
 - all staff adhere to the school's presentation policy
 - pupils are consistently encouraged to set out their work neatly.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that all middle leaders understand how to use the school's new tracking system to identify underperforming groups in their subjects and year groups.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Although the school went through a short period of instability in recruiting a new headteacher, the local authority, together with the governors, took swift action to engage the services of two highly effective headteachers from The Moorlands Primary Federation. Together with the assistant headteacher of the school, they have set a clear agenda to successfully improve standards and ensure that teaching is never less than good.
- Good teaching has led to pupils making good gains in learning in reading, writing and mathematics. The systematic analysis of test results by the senior leaders, coupled with very secure monitoring of catch-up programmes, has rapidly improved pupils' attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Determined leadership has created a culture of high expectation, with all staff sharing a common goal in ensuring that pupils enjoy learning and achieve well in relation to their starting points.
- The leaders of the school make good use of information from regular checks on teaching and analysis of pupils' progress. This is developing teachers' skills of precise planning to develop skills that pupils have to master before they can move onto new learning.
- The new leadership team has successfully won the hearts and minds of all staff, pupils and parents because of the good systems of communication. Everyone is clear of what needs to be done and how targets will be achieved. Parents receive weekly newsletters in relation to what their children will be learning in school and how they can encourage learning at home. The school is a harmonious community where individual talents of staff are valued and good quality professional development is provided to enable them to improve their teaching skills.
- All senior leaders and governors evaluate the school's performance accurately and know the school's strengths and areas for development. The local authority, in ensuring that areas for development are successfully addressed, provides good support.
- Middle leaders are developing into their roles and are committed to the high expectations of senior leaders and governors, but they are not yet fully familiar with using and interpreting a range of information to find ways to improve pupils' attainment and progress and rely on the senior leaders to do this for them.
- The balanced curriculum promotes pupils' knowledge of different faiths, customs and traditions. Pupils have good knowledge of the British values of democracy and freedom of speech. Links with the British Legion enable the pupils to hear accounts of veterans' life during the Second World War leading them to appreciate how lives were lost fighting for democracy.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and this results in them having a strong sense of justice, respect for other cultures and knowledge of the different religions that make up multi-cultural Britain. Pupils enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities such as the bug club, dance and art clubs and African drumming.
- A strong feature of the school is the very caring and sensitive respect that pupils have for their teachers and for each other. Pupils put forward a bid to governors to fund a friendship stop so that no pupil ever feels isolated at school. Parents are delighted with the caring nature of the school and the opportunities that are given to their children to participate in the wide range of learning outside the classroom, such as residential trips and visits to Shugborough.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well, as demonstrated by the good and better progress all groups of pupils make. Governors are vigilant in their duties of monitoring the progress of all pupils and ensuring that any additional funds are spent wisely. The primary physical education and sports premium is used well, resulting in every pupil participating in sports activity. It funds specialist coaches who take sports lessons in conjunction with teachers – who increase their knowledge of sports activities by working alongside the coaches. As a result, pupils develop healthier lifestyles and improved physical well-being.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide extra support for disadvantaged pupils and as a result they have caught up with all pupils nationally. Funding is used to pay for the staff to help individual pupils in their learning and is also used to pay for educational visits and events, which help these pupils make good progress.
- The leadership of special educational needs is good. Record keeping is thorough, timely and accurate with clear and effective communication with a wide range of agencies. Pupils receive the extra help that they need and parents are pleased with their achievement.

- Partnerships with cluster schools and the secondary school are having a positive impact on transition. The work of an experienced languages teacher from The Cheadle Academy is enabling pupils throughout the school to learn both French and German. This prepares them well for secondary school and contributes to their cultural awareness.
- The local authority has worked effectively with the school to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement. Its involvement has lessened due to the good gains that pupils have made in their learning since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - has a clear understanding of its role in supporting school improvement; governors are well informed of the school's strengths and know the areas for development, including the quality of teaching and the impact that this has on the progress of different groups
 - regularly asks questions pertaining to the progress that different groups of pupils make and have themselves identified that the presentation of work in the exercise books of some of the pupils from the Reception class to Year 4 is not as neat as it could be
 - understands the links between teachers' performance and pay decisions ensuring that the system is fair and transparent and that good teachers get rewarded
 - ensures that finances are well managed and that funds such as pupil premium and primary physical education and sports funding are spent accurately to ensure sustainable improvements
 - plays an active role in all aspects of school life and meets regularly with the senior leaders who are both challenged and supported in equal measures
 - seeks the views of parents and carers to ensure that their views are taken into consideration when entering into a soft federation.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There are good systems and procedures in place that everyone understands and these are implemented correctly. The school works well with parents and appropriate agencies to make sure that pupils are fully supported.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The inspector's observation of the learning in classrooms, school's analysis of pupils' performance and interviews with pupils about their learning all show that the quality of teaching has improved and is typically good. As a result, pupils' progress is rapidly improving. Teachers make good links across subjects to deepen pupils' learning in writing and mathematics. For example in the lower Key Stage 2, pupils wrote at length about their science experiment in 'making rain' in class. Their writing demonstrated secure skills of observation and identification of the scientific factors that caused this to happen.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and their planning of lessons is thorough. They are expert at identifying precisely the skills that pupils need to learn. In a mathematics lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher used a wide variety of resources to explain odd and even numbers including showing pupils a short film clip on sorting pairs of socks.
- Teachers evaluate their lessons thoroughly, identifying pupils who might not have fully grasped concepts that have been taught so that teaching assistants can coach them. This seamless approach between teachers and support staff contributes to the good gains that pupils make in learning.
- Teachers carefully analyse information from tests and immediately address the weaker issues. For example, in the oldest class, several pupils had not grasped problem solving in mathematics. Immediately, these pupils were given extra support and the teacher broke down the problem into simple steps to ensure that at each stage, pupils were clear as to what was asked of them. This precision in teaching lies at the heart of the practice in the school and ensures that all groups of pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points.
- Teachers observe their pupils' responses in lessons vigilantly during lessons and know when they have not quite grasped the explanation. This was seen both in the teaching of English in the Year 5/6 class when pupils were writing a 'spy thriller' and were unsure as to how to capture the engagement of the reader and in Year 3/4, when pupils were trying to make notes from a text describing the life of Celts. Both teachers modelled ways in which the pupils could present their work and this had a very positive impact on learning of all groups of pupils.
- Teachers across the school mark work thoroughly in accordance with the school's current marking policy.

Pupils respond to their teachers' marking and undertake their corrections – resulting in a decrease of spelling errors.

- Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to learning and ensure that they communicate effectively with teachers; at times, it is difficult to distinguish between them and the teachers in lessons as they work so well together.
- There are, nevertheless, occasions when teachers in all but the oldest class do not place sufficient emphasis on high standards of presentation in the pupils' exercise books and pupils' best work is not neat enough – an issue picked up by governors when they undertook a monitoring exercise relating to looking at pupils' exercise books.
- The teaching of phonics, punctuation, spelling and grammar is very thorough and this contributes to the good progress that all groups of pupils have made. Teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that the basic skills of reading and mathematics are fully understood by pupils. The school does all that it can to develop in pupils a thirst for learning. Lessons are interesting and teachers use many interesting strategies to engage pupils in learning, such as using drama to act out experiences before pupils write about them.
- The school's motto of 'Pace, Fun and Challenge' is seen in most lessons and is having a positive impact on the progress made by all groups of pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to see themselves as confident and resilient learners. Help is given when needed, but not before pupils have taken the risk to 'have a go'. This gives pupils the confidence to push through any perceived barriers to learning because they know that no matter what, they will be supported in achieving the highest outcomes.
- Pupils appreciate everything that the school does for them. They say that they enjoy Friday's 'Knit and Natter' club because it helps them to connect with older people in the community. Pupils serve the community well by organising fund raising events for Macmillan nurses and by singing carols in the village. They have a keen appreciation of those less fortunate than themselves and raise money for a wide range of charities. This has a positive effect on their emerging skills of leadership.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe both at school and in the community. They know how to use the internet safely and they talked at length to the inspector about the bullying charter drawn up as a result of anti-bullying week. They know the different forms that bullying can take and have absolute faith in the adults knowing what to do should it occur.
- The school works hard at keeping pupils safe. The school site is secure and visitors are carefully checked. Parents say that their children are safe in school due to the diligence of staff in ensuring that all school policies are correctly followed.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, they hang on their teacher's every word and they want to do their very best in lessons.
- Pupils are polite, courteous and respectful of the whole school community. Attendance is now above average and persistent absenteeism has been eradicated due to the school's good efforts to improve attendance.
- Pupils have mature attitudes; they are sensible, hard-working, caring towards others and are aware of the needs of others. Parents say that behaviour is typically good within the school.
- Teachers manage behaviour well in lessons. Lessons proceed without interruption due to pupils' mature attitudes to learning.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- With small numbers in classes, performance in the national tests has to be treated with caution. Work in pupils' books and analysis of the school's information on pupils' progress shows that since the last inspection attainment has risen over two years. In 2015, standards were above those seen of Year 6 pupils nationally

in reading and writing. In mathematics, they were similar to those of all Year 6 pupils nationally. By the end of Year 2, pupils attained similar standards to all pupils nationally. Pupils' progress is strongest in Key Stage 2 because by the time pupils enter Year 3, teachers have ironed out weaknesses in letter formation that were apparent in the early years.

- Pupils' achievements are good across the school and pupils are avid readers who talk about their favourite authors and their love of books. Pupils' good reading skills are attributable to the good progress that they make in linking letters to sounds. The school has effectively improved pupils' reading skills through well focused guided reading activities, where pupils discuss text and the author's intention of conveying meaning through the emphasis placed on particular words.
- The results of the most recent Year 1 phonics (linking letters with sounds) screening check show that pupils reach the expected standard for their age.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because of the emphasis that teachers place on ensuring that they acquire correct mathematical vocabulary, knowledge of number bonds and skilful reading of mathematical problems. This helps them to solve mathematical problems accurately.
- Standards in the quality of writing demonstrate that pupils have secure knowledge in the writing conventions needed for writing a diary, recount and poem. Pupils in the oldest class wrote gripping spy stories that had a distinct 'Ian Fleming' flavour because the teacher expertly demonstrated the words that authors use to create suspense.
- The school's most-able pupils are making good progress because they are given challenging tasks in lessons. In science, they devise their own ways of recording conclusions reached from experiments, in mathematics they apply their knowledge to a wide range of problem solving activities and in writing they write at length in other subjects. Higher proportions are now exceeding the expected standards for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs across the school make good progress as a result of the immediate support that they receive if teachers think that they have not understood explanations given in lessons. This is very effective in accelerating their rates of progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils catch up with their peers very quickly. There is no gap in their attainment compared with other pupils in the school because governors have spent the allocated money wisely in ensuring that these pupils receive the help that they need.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start school with skills and abilities that are typical for their age and a large majority leave with a good level of development. Good teaching, secure routines, high levels of care and effective support enable these young children to be ready for learning in Year 1.
- Good links have been established with nurseries and pre-schools and adults make it their business to find out what children have learnt previously so that when children enter the Reception class they do not repeat work that they have already covered.
- Since the last inspection, the school has developed the outside play area which now has an appropriate balance of activities that promote children's curiosity. A wide range of mark making materials are available for children to practise their early writing skills but there are some missed opportunities for guidance and direction from adults to both demonstrate and check if children are forming their letters correctly.
- Children experience stimulating indoor and outdoor activities that enable them to become confident learners. When learning about numbers, they count how many coins pirates have collected using the plus sign to add them up and in the role-play area they act out the help that paramedics offer to people who have been in accidents.
- Children are encouraged to try all activities that are provided both indoors and outdoors. They eagerly look at books in the book den and know where to find challenge cards, should they finish an activity early. Good teaching ensures that adults give clear explanations and consistently check children's understanding. There are good systems for recording children's learning and parents are informed of what they can do to help their children learn at home.
- Children behave well because they know what is expected of them. They take turns, share toys and form trusting relationships with adults. Good arrangements for welfare and safety enable children to feel safe and secure in learning.
- There is strong leadership of the early years. Staff ensure that learning is fun but is balanced with opportunities that prepare children well for learning at Key Stage 1. Additional funding is used well to narrow

gaps and to ensure that disadvantaged children receive the help that they need in order to achieve as well as their peers.

- The school's good work with other providers and external services is having a strong impact on children's well-being, as visits made to settings enable the early years leader to get to know the children and their families before they come to school.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 124138 |
| Local authority | Staffordshire |
| Inspection number | 10002492 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 85 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Paul Buckley |
| Headteacher | Mr Jared Eccles |
| Telephone number | 01538 722370 |
| Website | www.greatwood.staffs.sch.uk |
| Email address | office@greatwood.staffs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6–7 November 2013 |

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Early years provision is full time in the Reception class.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding to assist certain groups, which in this school applies to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those pupils in care of the local authority) is above the national average.
- Classes are taught in mixed-age groups in all but the Reception class.
- Since January 2015, the school has become part of a collaboration with The Moorlands Primary Federation (TMPF) and is overseen by an executive headteacher and associate headteacher – both from outstanding schools.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, including five that were jointly observed by the executive headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to three pupils read, met with groups of pupils to discuss their work and gather their views on typical behaviour in the school and on how teachers were helping them with their learning.
- Meetings were held with a representative of the local authority and three members of the governing body.
- The inspector took account of the 21 online responses to the Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector analysed nine questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspector spoke to staff to provide feedback on lessons seen and to seek their views on how continuous professional development opportunities had improved their practice.
- The inspector discussed the school's systems and strategies for improvement with the executive headteacher and associate headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the middle leaders of the school in relation to how the curriculum was planned and how assessments were analysed.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation including the school's most recent analysis of pupils' achievement, progress and performance.
- Minutes of governing body meetings and anonymised teachers' performance management were also scrutinised.
- The inspector analysed information pertaining to pupils' behaviour over time, attendance and the school's system to ensure pupils' safety.

Inspection team

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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