

St Luke's CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124250
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	380843
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glennys White
Headteacher	Joanne Kirkham
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2007
School address	Leek Road Endon Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9EB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 17 lessons or parts of lessons led by eight different teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at development plans, records of pupils' progress, and minutes from meetings of the governing body, as well as other documents. They scrutinised 82 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and questionnaires from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What is the school doing to boost pupils' progress in writing?
- Are there variations in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2, particularly in the way that assessment is used to support learning?
- What is the impact of the new leadership, especially on developing the skills of subject leaders and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. A new deputy was appointed at Easter 2011 and a new headteacher joined the school in September 2011. The teacher in the Reception class is also new to the school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Luke's Church of England Primary School is a good school. It has rapidly improved many areas of its work since the arrival of the new headteacher and deputy. Pupils take pride in their school. They feel safe and are confident that staff take their concerns seriously. Behaviour is good, both in classes and around the school, and pupils attend school regularly. They are sensitive to the feelings of others and this is reflected in the way they treat each other.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 because they both offer an interesting learning environment reinforced by good quality adult support. Progress in Key Stage 2 is more variable: although teaching is good, there are minor variations in the quality of teaching. For example, introductions to lessons are occasionally too long and, as a result, pupils grow restless. Although teachers now have a better understanding of the levels that pupils are working at, pupils are sometimes all set the same work. This can hold back the progress of more-able pupils because they are not being challenged sufficiently. The quality of marking and guidance varies from outstanding to satisfactory. Consequently, some pupils in Key Stage 2 do not always get the very best advice about how to improve their work. Nevertheless, pupils often make very rapid progress in Year 6 as a result of outstanding teaching and attainment is usually above average by the end of Key Stage 2.

Although overall achievement is good, pupils' progress is not checked regularly enough and there is limited analysis of the performance of different groups of pupils. Significant improvements have been made to the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other potentially vulnerable pupils, but not enough is done to monitor their academic progress. There are also few additional programmes available to support those in danger of falling behind and the impact of the existing programmes has not been adequately measured. Although improvements have been made to the satisfactory curriculum, the school is aware that parts of the curriculum in Key Stage 2 still lack excitement and do not fully reflect pupils' interests. Links between different elements of the curriculum have yet to be fully developed.

The ambition and clear vision of the headteacher, and the deputy have been successfully shared with staff and the governing body. There is an excellent awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and development planning accurately focuses on those areas where there is the most need for improvement. All

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this reflects the school's steadfast commitment to ensuring that pupils all reach their full potential. Combined with the rapid speed of improvement, this indicates the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Address variations in the pace of learning in Key Stage 2 by:
 - making certain that introductions to lessons are not too long
 - ensuring that work is always well matched to pupils' needs and provides suitable challenge for more-able pupils
 - addressing inconsistencies in the quality of marking and the use of targets
 - developing the curriculum so it takes better account of pupils' interests and more links are made between subjects
 - ensuring that there are appropriate programmes in place to support those pupils who may be in danger of falling behind.

- Improve the way pupils' progress is monitored by:
 - making more regular checks on all pupils' attainment and progress
 - ensuring that the progress of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is carefully analysed
 - making certain that the impact of intervention programmes is measured.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

When children enter the Reception class their skills are broadly average. They are confident and ready to learn but their early skills in reading and writing are often similar to those expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment is often above average with an above average proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 5 in both English and mathematics. Although pupils' progress is good, it is more uneven in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning makes a very important contribution to their good achievement. They work hard in lessons and show a determination to succeed. Pupils frequently help each other with tasks and cooperate well. A consistent approach to how story writing is taught has helped to improve pupil's progress in writing. By the time they are in Year 6, many pupils are producing very engaging and technically accurate pieces of writing. An extensive vocabulary, combined with good use of humour and imaginative structuring of writing, means that readers really want to read on and find out what happens next. Skilled learning support assistants are able to successfully reshape teachers' explanations and make certain that those pupils who find learning hard are able to understand the concepts that are being taught. Consequently, learning support assistants contribute well to the good progress in lessons that is now being made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Spiritual development is especially strong and pupils are able to reflect well on many important dilemmas. Although pupils have a strong sense of their own culture, they are less

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knowledgeable about other cultures because they have relatively few opportunities to meet others from backgrounds that are different from their own. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and this is demonstrated in their good behaviour. Occasionally, they lose concentration when they have to listen to their teacher for a relatively long time but misbehaviour is rare. Pupils are very willing to contribute to the school and local communities. This includes pupils belonging to the school council, supporting other pupils and raising money for charities. Pupils understand the need to take regular exercise and to eat healthily. They usually make sensible choices about the food they eat and are keen to be involved in extra-curricular sport. Pupils’ good basic skills, together with above average attendance, their self-assurance and ability to work as part of a team means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

During introductions to lessons, many teachers try to provide more demanding activities for more-able pupils and they make a good attempt to ask these pupils more challenging questions. However, there are still examples, particularly in Key Stage 2, where pupils are not making optimum progress during lengthy lesson introductions. A better attempt is being made to match activities to pupils’ needs when they are working independently. Nevertheless, in some Key Stage 2 lessons, there is still an over reliance on commercial mathematics schemes with pupils of different abilities being set exactly the same exercises to complete. There are some examples of exceptionally thorough marking, particularly in Years 2 and 6, which

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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gives pupils crystal clear indications about how to improve their work. There are some remaining inconsistencies, though, in the quality of marking and use of target setting in Key Stage 2.

New staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 have introduced more exciting activities; for example, parents and carers described the re-enactment of the Great Fire of London as 'a triumph'. In Key Stage 2, links are not consistently made between subjects and some lessons still lack creativity. A whole school approach designed to enhance pupils' progress in writing is being consistently applied by teachers and is helping to boost pupils' progress. At the same time, the range of programmes intended to help those pupils who have difficulties in learning and who might be in danger of falling behind is very narrow. There is a wide range of enrichment activities and many pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Sports clubs are also very popular amongst pupils. A good range of visits brings learning to life and a recent visit to a local museum was used well to stimulate writing in Year 6.

The school provides a very welcoming and caring environment. There has been a strong focus on monitoring and improving attendance rates and a rise in persistent absence has now been addressed. New leaders have responded promptly to the concerns of parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and have made significant improvements to the way these pupils and other potentially vulnerable pupils are supported. This includes improved contact with external agencies, improved implementation of advice from these agencies and the production of individual education plans that contain far more specific targets for improvement.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

New leaders have very swiftly implemented well-thought-out strategies that are rapidly improving outcomes for pupils. Very accurate checks have already been made on the quality of teaching and the vast majority of staff are very eager to implement suggested improvements. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving. Subject leaders are being given increased responsibilities for developing their subjects and are keen and enthusiastic. They have already delivered training sessions for staff but their impact has been hampered by lack of robust systems for tracking pupils' progress and they are yet to monitor lessons or evaluate marking. Although the school teaches its pupils to respect difference and the rights of others, it has not

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done enough to monitor the outcomes for different groups of pupils. Therefore, the effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity is satisfactory, despite pupils' good progress.

Staff and members of the governing body are well aware of their responsibilities relating to safeguarding. This has been improved through additional training and the school's record keeping is now of good quality. Consequently, the school's arrangements for safeguarding are now good. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body provides the school with support as well as ensuring that statutory requirements are met. A lack of detailed information about pupils' attainment and progress has restricted its ability to challenge the school. The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. Good links with its neighbouring community are exemplified by the way the pupils have worked on local activities such as well-dressing. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to meet those from different backgrounds from their own and international links are only just developing.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents and carers are understandably very pleased with provision in the Reception class. Good leadership and management have resulted in significant improvements to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and currently children are making good progress in lessons. This is because they are offered an exciting range of activities that capture their interest and imagination and move their learning on. These activities are well supported by adults who use questioning effectively to model language for children. There is a strong emphasis on learning to write and children are responding well. For example, they were very motivated by the role play

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available in the 'optician's shop' and were very keen to write notes and to book appointments for customers which also developed their understanding of time. The outdoors is used well to support learning and children are able to move freely between indoor and outdoor provision. Children's learning is carefully checked. Records of their learning journeys are very detailed and used well to plan children's next steps in learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a good response to the questionnaire and many parents and carers provided additional written comments. Parents and carers are generally pleased with the quality of education provided by the school, and many comments made reference to the 'huge' improvements already secured by the new headteacher. Although parents have been concerned about the amount of information they received about their children's attainment and progress, many parents and carers are now delighted to be informed about the levels their children are working at and to receive their children's targets. They now feel that their concerns are listened to. Some parents and carers are still worried about inconsistencies in rates of progress and the inspection team and senior managers agree there is still more to do to address this, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Luke's CofE (VC) Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	71	23	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	68	24	29	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	33	45	55	6	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	40	35	43	7	9	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	35	43	34	41	5	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	45	55	23	28	7	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	57	33	40	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	39	36	44	3	4	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	33	40	37	45	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	29	47	57	4	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	37	39	48	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	48	29	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	48	59	28	34	3	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Luke's CofE (VC) Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 9EB

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. All of the team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. We were very impressed by your good behaviour and the respectful way you treat each other.

Your standards of attainment are above average. We really enjoyed reading the wonderful writing produced by those of you in Year 6. Children in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 get off to a good start. However, although your progress is good it can be a little uneven in Key Stage 2. We have asked your teachers to improve this by making sure all lessons are exciting and that good links are made between subjects. We noticed that the introductions to lessons can be a bit too long and that you are sometimes all set the same work in mathematics. We also noticed that some teachers provide you with very helpful marking and set you targets that tell you exactly how to improve your work. In Key Stage 2, occasionally marking is not quite as helpful and teachers do not always remember to refer to your targets. Therefore, we have asked staff to improve these aspects of their teaching.

The leaders and managers at your school are doing a good job. You and your parents and carers have recognised that they have made many important improvements to your school in a very short time. We have asked the school leaders to make sure they have enough information about the progress you make over time and to make certain that there are more special programmes available to help those of you who find learning difficult.

You can help your school to improve further by continuing to try very hard in all your lessons.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh
Lead inspector

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