

Inspection of St Leonard's Primary School

St Leonard's Avenue, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 4LT

Inspection dates: 25–26 September 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff at St Leonard's want to achieve the very best outcomes for their pupils. They want pupils to enjoy their learning and do well in all the subjects they study. Pupils visit historical places of interest. They learn about gardening and habitats in the school's conservation area. They carry out interesting investigations in science.

Leaders place a great emphasis on pupils' physical and mental well-being. They ensure that pupils are happy and safe and that all pupils are well supported. The school's positive ethos reflects the school's values. Leaders aim for pupils to be respectful, resilient, reflective, responsible, caring and confident. Teachers encourage pupils to try hard, have a go and persevere at things. Pupils are polite and friendly and are proud of their achievements.

Pupils enjoy warm and caring relationships with each other and with school staff. Pupils say that they are well looked after. They know that if they have a concern or a worry, including about bullying, an adult will help them sort it out. Pupils are well behaved. They understand the school's behaviour system well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have planned the curriculum carefully to broaden pupils' experiences and deepen their learning. Pupils develop as independent, resourceful learners. Teachers give pupils opportunities to practise knowledge, skills and understanding. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned.

Leaders have high expectations and are aspirational for their pupils. This drive and ambition have led to better reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.

Reading is a high priority. Pupils read a range of texts. They read books by different authors and develop their vocabulary well. For example, in Year 6 pupils read the classics such as 'Alice in Wonderland' as well as modern-day fiction. Younger pupils enjoy listening to familiar stories. They get better at remembering and predicting them and join in with enthusiasm.

Leaders ensure that they train staff well in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). Pupils achieve high standards. Teachers help pupils who fall behind to catch up quickly. Teachers provide most pupils with books matched to their phonic ability. Sometimes, however, pupils read books that are too difficult for them. This means that they have to guess words too often.

Subject leaders ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn next. Teachers make good use of the training they receive to strengthen their subject knowledge and expertise in subjects such as physical education (PE), for example.

On occasion, teachers do not show pupils or explain clearly enough what pupils need to do. Sometimes pupils move on too quickly to the next area of learning before they have fully understood what they are doing.

Leaders and teachers support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. The support they give is comprehensive and meets the needs of pupils with social and emotional needs as well as those who need academic support. Pupils with SEND achieve really well.

The curriculum extends beyond the academic. Pupils learn social skills such as helping one another and resolving conflicts. They learn about other nations and rights and respect. Pupils are confident to contribute their views through the school council. They have helped to develop a school charter. The school dog supports pupils' well-being and pupils with anxieties. Leaders provide extra-curricular activities such as sports, yoga, choir and green club.

Pupils conduct themselves well and exhibit good, polite behaviour. Pupils cooperate well with each other.

In early years the curriculum meets the needs of learners exceptionally well. Staff gather children's ideas and work alongside children to develop them. Teaching is precise and of the highest quality. All children are well supported and make strong progress. Children leave Reception well prepared for Year 1. Children develop their vocabulary well. For example, they use words such as abdomen and antennae to describe insects.

Children in the early years are confident and enjoy their learning. In the outdoor area children grow their own plants and learn about life cycles. Children manage risk in the construction and conservation areas and work together well.

Leadership is strong. The positive and open culture in school means that staff support each other well. Leaders provide governors with helpful information. This enables governors to have a clear overview of the work of the school and to hold leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established clear policies and procedures which help everyone to know how to keep children safe. Leaders train staff and governors. They ensure that staff and governors are well informed. Leaders provide staff and governors with regular updates. Staff are vigilant and report the smallest concerns. Leaders make prompt referrals or seek appropriate advice. They keep thorough records to maintain a clear overview of vulnerable pupils.

Pupils say they feel safe because teachers look after them, and parents agree. Pupils show a good understanding of safeguarding and digital safety. They learn to keep themselves safe through the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Phonics is taught well and pupils achieve high standards. Staff are generally skilled and well trained in developing pupils' reading skills. Most pupils read books that are matched to their phonic ability. However, this is not consistent in every year group. Sometimes pupils read books that are too difficult for them. This means that they cannot decode words accurately and are unable to read fluently. As a result, they become over reliant on pictures and guess words. Pupils need to know the common exception words and sounds more securely before moving on to books that contain them.
- The curriculum is well planned. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn and they build on pupils' prior learning. However, on occasion, they do not show or explain clearly enough to pupils what is required. This means that sometimes pupils' learning is hindered or the quality of what they produce is not as good as it could be. Leaders need to ensure that teachers consistently present explanations and examples clearly so that pupils have a better understanding of what is expected of them.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	124199
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10111672
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rachel Stacey
Headteacher	Helen Spearing
Website	www.st-leonards-stafford.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this school

- Since the last section 5 inspection, a new deputy headteacher and a new early years leader have been appointed. Three other teachers joined the school, including two newly qualified teachers in September 2019.
- A monitoring inspection was carried out in December 2018.
- The governing body run the school Nursery and an after-school club.
- The school no longer accommodates special needs provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors visited all classes, sometimes with a senior leader.
- The lead inspector observed staff listening to pupils read and observed phonics in early years and key stage 1.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the early years leader.

- Inspectors met with subject leaders in history, PE, English and mathematics. They looked at these subjects in detail, visiting lessons, looking at plans and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils about them.
- An inspector checked the school's record and procedures for the safe recruitment of staff. The lead inspector met with the headteacher, who is the designated safeguarding lead, to discuss safeguarding practice and check school records. Inspectors discussed safeguarding arrangements and practice with other staff and governors. Inspectors checked pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet.
- The lead inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair. She also spoke to a member of the local authority by telephone.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator, to discuss provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector met with newly qualified teachers to discuss their induction into the school and the support they receive.
- Inspectors observed pupils on the playground and in the dining room. They talked to pupils about their learning and experiences at St Leonard's.
- An inspector talked to parents before school. The lead inspector considered the 58 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 24 written comments. The lead inspector also considered the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 21 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the school website and considered a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, school policies, curriculum plans and published data.

Inspection team

Sue Cameron, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Ashley	Ofsted Inspector

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