

St Weonards Primary School

Mount Way, St Weonards, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 8NU

Inspection dates

29–30 November 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The school's effectiveness has improved markedly as a result of the efforts of current leaders and governors. They have worked tirelessly to bring about substantial and sustained improvements to teaching, learning and pupils' outcomes.
- Teaching is skilled and highly effective. Assessment is rigorous. Information about what pupils know already is used very well to plan the next steps. Teaching is tailored exceptionally well to individual pupils' needs. Consequently, no pupil falls behind.
- All pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress. They achieve highly in reading, writing and mathematics. They also do very well in a wide range of other subjects, including science, art, history and physical education.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are given excellent support and make rapid progress as a result.
- The rich and varied curriculum enhances pupils' experiences a great deal and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are respectful and responsive to adults and to each other. They are very well prepared for their next steps at secondary school, both academically and in their personal development.
- Everyone looks out for one another in this small, caring school. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and supportive. The school's core values underpin everything that is done.
- The arrangements for protecting pupils and keeping them safe are effective. Pupils, staff and parents have no concerns about pupils' safety or their behaviour.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception class. They make strong progress in all areas of learning.
- Any weaknesses in aspects of the school's work are minor and are being dealt with. The teaching of phonics is not always as precise as it should be. In addition, the assessment of how well pupils are doing in the foundation subjects is not as informative as that in reading, writing and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Fine tune teaching and learning in phonics by:
 - making sure that adults take great care to pronounce letter sounds accurately and use technical language with precision
 - taking steps to further strengthen links with the pre-school by sharing with the staff the approach used to teach phonics in the main school.
- Continue working to refine and fully embed the arrangements for assessing pupils' learning in the foundation subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The school's effectiveness has improved a great deal since it was last inspected. This is because the school's leaders, with strong support from the federation, have worked tirelessly, purposefully and successfully to promote excellence in teaching, learning and outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders know exactly what is working well at St Weonards and where they next need to focus their efforts. They have a deep understanding of all aspects of the school's work at their fingertips. This is because leaders, including subject leaders, are closely involved in seeking everyone's views and in checking on teaching and learning. They act decisively on the findings. The school's strategic overview is underpinned by individual action plans that subject leaders draw up in the light of their monitoring activities.
- In such a small school, everyone has several key responsibilities. This is managed very well, however, because the school makes judicious use of the skills, expertise and resources offered by other schools in the federation. For example, the federation's lead person for SEN and/or disabilities gives highly effective support to staff at St Weonards. As a result, provision for pupils who have SEN is targeted precisely on their individual needs and they make strong progress.
- The staff team is cohesive and hugely loyal to the school. Staff are always seeking to improve their own performance. They benefit from a very wide range of opportunities for their professional development. Training and development link both to the school's current priorities and to their needs and career aspirations. Leaders are outward looking and make sure that staff have many chances to visit other, larger schools and to learn from good practice. Leaders have high expectations of staff's performance. They set challenging, quantifiable targets as part of the annual appraisal process. Staff rise to these challenges.
- Pupils speak knowledgeably about the core values that are at the heart of the school's work. The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and on helping them grow and develop into responsible citizens, ready to take their place in modern Britain. Detailed and well-thought-out plans show exactly how this is done, in every year group.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and engaging. Topics make effective and imaginative links between different subjects and give pupils the chance to study things in depth. Pupils choose what they would like to learn during 'themed weeks'. Staff take every opportunity to broaden pupils' horizons and to give them the chance to work and play alongside pupils from other schools and to make new friends. For example, older pupils take part in residential experiences with pupils from other schools in the federation. Pupils have a wealth of chances to take part in sporting activities from the rough and tumble of rugby through to the serenity of fly fishing. There are also many exciting opportunities for dance, drama and music, including performances in front of a large audience at a theatre in Hereford.
- Leaders make optimum use of additional funding. Pupil premium funding is very well spent. It makes sure that disadvantaged pupils make the same strong progress as

everyone else and that they have an equal opportunity to take part in clubs and visits. Physical education and sport funding has been spent to give every pupil the chance to participate in physical activity and to benefit from specialist teaching. The impact of the spending of additional SEN funding shows clearly in the excellent progress that pupils who have SEN make.

- The school has the strong support of parents. Every eligible parent completed the online survey, Parent View. All agreed that they would recommend the school to others. Several pointed out how much they value the 'family' atmosphere at the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance is strong. Governors take a keen interest in all aspects of the school's work and strive to make sure that it offers the very best to the pupils. To do this, they hold leaders firmly to account for the school's effectiveness. Governors scrutinise carefully the headteacher's detailed reports, but they do not take the information at face value. They ask questions to seek clarification and visit the school regularly to gain first-hand evidence. They also visit to check on progress with priorities in the school's development plan. Visiting governors complete comprehensive written records of their findings that they share with the whole governing body.
- Governors keep a very close eye on the school's finances. They fully understand the challenges that such a small school faces. However, they do not shy away from making difficult decisions in order to keep the books balanced. They are very well informed about the spending of additional funding, such as the pupil premium and physical education and sport premium, and the impact that it has had. They also understand how teachers' performance is managed. Teachers do not receive pay rises without governors' agreement.
- Governors check assiduously on the school's arrangements for protecting pupils and keeping them safe.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and governors have made sure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding at St Weonards. Staff at all levels understand their responsibilities and know what to do should they have a concern. Training for staff is thorough and frequently updated, and covers an extensive range of safeguarding matters, including the risk of radicalisation.
- The school's lead person for safeguarding works closely and effectively with the federation's safeguarding lead. Records are carefully and securely kept and show that appropriate and timely action is taken where there are concerns.
- Leaders place a strong emphasis on teaching pupils to recognise risk and to understand how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet. They work with a number of outside agencies such as the NSPCC to teach pupils how to deal with situations that make them uncomfortable. Within school, circle time and lessons in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education teach pupils how to live safe and healthy lives.

- Pupils, parents and members of staff raised no concerns about pupils' safety at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers expect that every pupil will behave impeccably and do their best. There is a purposeful, working atmosphere in classrooms. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and supportive.
- Teachers make sure that pupils understand exactly what they are learning and the reasons why. They ask probing questions to check on how well pupils are doing. They immediately take steps to adjust their teaching and present ideas in a different way if a pupil appears to be struggling too much. Pupils know what they must do to be successful. They explain clearly what they are working towards, and how it connects with what they have done before.
- Pupils' attainment and progress are regularly and carefully assessed. To make sure that assessments are pin-point accurate, teachers cross-check their judgements with leaders and with teachers from other schools. They also back up their assessments with formal, standardised tests.
- Teachers plan lessons that take full account of the information they have about what pupils already know and can do, and what they need to do next. They take care to include just the right amount of challenge, so that pupils have to think hard, but they do not give them tasks that they cannot complete.
- Teaching is highly individualised. The staff have a deep understanding of the ways in which each pupil likes to learn and of any potential barriers to success. They encourage pupils to talk about their learning with others and to debate and share ideas, including constructive criticism. As a result, pupils are not afraid of getting things wrong, seeing mistakes as a way to learn more.
- Teachers give pupils precise feedback during lessons and in writing in pupils' books. It gives pupils a secure understanding of what they need to do to improve still further. Pupils are quick to get out their 'polishing pen' if they spot something that could be made better.
- The considerable strengths in teaching mean that pupils make strong progress in their learning across a range of subjects. Teachers make sure that pupils use and apply what they have learned in different subjects, in order to embed the learning still further. 'Basic skills' lessons help those pupils who need it to deepen their understanding of important concepts in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are appropriately challenged by their work. They persevere if they find tasks difficult initially, and approach tasks in different ways to try to find a solution. By the upper years of key stage 2, pupils are resilient and assured learners. Pupils sometimes challenge themselves. During this inspection, pupils in Year 1 were practising writing numbers. Not content with single-digit numbers, they decided to write bigger ones. 'I can write 100,' said one, and did so correctly. They understandably came a little unstuck when they decided to write the biggest number they could think of, one million.

- Pupils take a great deal of care to present their work well. Books are neat and tidy. Pupils' handwriting is excellent. From Year 1 onwards, pupils join their letters and write neatly and legibly.
- Phonics are taught well. This makes sure that every child reaches the expected standard by the time they leave key stage 1. However, adults do not always remember to pronounce the letter sounds accurately, and occasionally do not use technical vocabulary with precision.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. One parent whose daughter recently left St Weonards wrote to the inspectors: 'Our daughter has gone to high school a well-grounded, polite and well-educated young lady.'
- The promotion of pupils' personal development permeates the curriculum. Pupils develop their self-awareness and their understanding of others' viewpoints through circle time, PSHE education, religious education and lessons in the social and emotional aspects of learning. Over time, they grow in confidence and self-assurance. Older pupils are mature, thoughtful and sensible individuals. They are well prepared for their next steps at secondary school.
- Pupils have numerous opportunities to contribute to life at school and in the wider community. Pupils volunteer to join the school council and the eco council. They frequently raise funds for local and national causes. Some older pupils are specially chosen to be 'maths ambassadors'. They help to teach important mathematical ideas to the younger pupils. They are proud to be selected for this work. It has the added bonus of reinforcing their own mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- During this inspection, pupils were rehearsing for their Christmas production. Pupils cooperated and collaborated to improve their performances. Older ones made sure that the younger ones knew where they were to sit and what they should do. They all sang songs with gusto and obvious enjoyment and pride in their efforts.
- Pupils' welfare is at the forefront of the school's work. In this small school, everyone knows one another very well. Staff take care to make sure that pupils are looked after at all times. They pay close attention to pupils' emotional and physical well-being. Staff work closely and effectively with outside agencies to support individual pupils and their families where necessary. Pupils learn to look after themselves and keep safe through numerous activities, including involvement with the 'Crucial Crew' personal safety education programme.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. From the youngest to the oldest, pupils behave impeccably in lessons, listening attentively and responding straight away to requests and instructions. At break- and lunchtimes, pupils are lively and sociable. Pupils make

strong friendships across the year groups. Older pupils frequently look out for the younger ones and make sure that they are safe and happy.

- Pupils are friendly and polite. They are respectful of adults and keen to show what they have learned at school.
- Pupils, parents and staff report no worries about behaviour or bullying. Pupils understand what bullying is, including cyber bullying. They say that it does not happen at St Weonards, and the school's records confirm this. The pupils also say that if anyone did behave inappropriately, an adult would quickly intervene. 'Teachers are kind. They will sort things out,' said one.
- In such a small school, the absence of even one pupil makes a big difference to the attendance figures. However, pupils rarely miss school and the current figures are well above last year's national average. The staff track attendance rigorously, and swiftly follow up any unexplained absence. The federation's educational welfare officer becomes involved with families should there be particular difficulties. She offers support and encouragement, as well as making expectations and consequences very clear.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Work in pupils' books confirms that pupils achieve highly and make strong and sustained progress over time. Since the start of this academic year, many pupils have made substantial progress in writing, mathematics and topic work. Their books show clearly how they have deepened their knowledge and understanding. Many are working securely within or beyond the expectations for their age. For example, older pupils' writing has become more complex and sophisticated, with a good sense of audience. Younger pupils have progressed from writing simple words and phrases to re-telling familiar stories in correctly spelled and punctuated sentences.
- Pupils attained highly in the past year's national tests and assessments at the end of Year 6. The standards they reached were well above those of other pupils across the country. These pupils built strongly on their attainment at the end of Year 2, especially in mathematics. There were too few pupils in Year 2 last year for their results to be considered statistically significant in comparison with those of other pupils nationally. However, the school's assessments show that all four made strong progress from their individual starting points.
- There are no discernible differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make swift progress in developing fluency and a wide vocabulary. This is because of the high-quality individual support they receive. They then quickly catch up with other pupils. Pupils who have SEN also receive carefully targeted support and as a result make rapid progress that helps them quickly move closer to the expectations for their age. Disadvantaged pupils, too, make progress that is often faster than that of others in the school. This helps them to catch up with others.
- The school's current assessment information shows that no groups of pupils are lagging behind others in reading, writing or mathematics. All are making strong progress over time. Assessments in other subjects show that almost all pupils are

achieving the expectations for their age or are exceeding them. However, the recording system that the school currently uses does not reflect the progress that pupils have made and that shows clearly in their written work.

- Pupils do well in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. For the past three years, the school has made sure that every pupil has reached the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils build well on the love of reading that they develop in early years. Pupils read with fluency, expression and understanding. Classrooms have well-stocked reading areas and all pupils have a reading book close at hand. Pupils take pleasure in reading aloud what they have written to others in the class.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children settle happily into the Reception class and are quickly ready to learn. Most transfer from the adjoining pre-school. The Reception teacher works closely with the pre-school staff and this helps to ensure that transition from one setting to another is smooth and easy.
- Teaching in Reception is skilled and effective, and very responsive to the children's needs and interests. Consequently, children make substantial progress from their starting points and typically achieve highly. Those whose starting points are lower make rapid progress towards the expectations for their age. The children are very well prepared to start Year 1 and to continue learning.
- The children behave very well indeed. They play happily with one another. They respond eagerly to adults and are keen to try new things. They concentrate very well and persevere with activities, and tidy up afterwards. The children understand the routines of the day and what is expected of them. They quickly learn to manage their own personal needs. During the inspection, children were keen to work outdoors despite the very cold weather. All successfully put on and fastened up their coats.
- Children develop a deep love of books and reading. They thoroughly enjoy re-telling favourite stories. The book corner is inviting and very well stocked.
- Adults know the children exceptionally well. They make frequent and systematic observations, taking numerous photographs that illustrate learning. They keep the photographs and assess what children have achieved using an online system. They then identify the precise next steps that are needed to take learning on. The pre-school staff have begun to use the same system, which makes sure that there is an accurate baseline and a shared understanding of what each child knows and can do.
- Staff have strong and productive links with parents. Parents said that they were so pleased to be able to log into the assessment system and see exactly what their children have been doing and achieving during the day. They have the scope to add photographs and observations of their child's learning at home. Parents said how much they value being able to contribute. They also praised the excellent individual support that their children receive.
- The learning environment, indoors and out, is well organised and purposeful, inspiring children to want to participate. Children have the chance throughout the day to make

choices and decisions. They use the activities that have been carefully prepared for them, and make suggestions of their own.

- The Reception teacher works productively with the early years leader from the federation. They work very well together to evaluate what is working well and what they could do to improve still further. They are seeking to further develop joint working with the pre-school, for example to share expertise in the teaching of phonics.
- Early years welfare requirements are met. Children are kept safe and are very well looked after. Parents raised no concerns about their children's safety or welfare at school.

School details

Unique reference number	116740
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10037147

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	20
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Nash
Executive Headteacher	Maggi Newton
Telephone number	01981 580352
Website	www.stweonards.hmfa.org.uk
Email address	admin@st-weonards.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2013

Information about this school

- St Weonards is much smaller than a typical primary school. The number of pupils on roll has fallen since the school was last inspected.
- The pupils come from the village and a wide area across the surrounding countryside. Most of the pupils are White British. A few are from other backgrounds and a small number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national proportion. A small number of pupils are disadvantaged.
- The school is part of the Herefordshire Marches Federation of Schools.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Two inspectors led this inspection, for one day each. The inspectors met at school at the end of the first day, to ensure a smooth handover.
- At the start of each day, the inspectors met members of staff and toured the school. They made several visits to classrooms to observe teaching and learning, accompanied by the executive headteacher. While there, they spoke to pupils about their work and looked at their books. They also spoke briefly to members of staff. Inspectors also observed pupils and spoke to them at break- and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held some formal meetings. They met with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the chief executive officer of the federation. They also met other leaders who have curriculum and phase responsibilities. They met the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, a group of pupils, the federation’s coordinator of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the federation’s lead member of staff for safeguarding. An inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including the school’s self-evaluation and plans for improvement, assessment information, and information about the performance management of staff and the ways in which leaders check on how well the school is doing. They also looked at information about safeguarding and attendance, and information on the school’s website.
- One inspector met parents at the start of the day. Inspectors considered the views of 16 parents who completed the online survey (Parent View) and looked at their free-text comments. They also took account of the views of four members of staff and 15 pupils who completed the online surveys.

Inspection team

Linda McGill, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Diane Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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