

Aqueduct Primary School

Castlefields Way, Aqueduct, Telford, TF4 3RP

Inspection dates 15–16 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not make as much or as rapid progress as they are capable of doing.
- There is not enough good or outstanding teaching.
- More-able pupils do not have enough opportunities to do work that fully stretches them.
- School leaders do not check on pupils' progress to identify underperformance, especially for the more able. As a result, leaders have not held the teachers to account for their pupils' progress with sufficient rigour.
- When teachers mark the work of pupils they do not always explain fully how it can be improved.
- The governing body has not challenged leaders enough in the past about the school's performance.
- A significant number of parents do not believe that the school provides enough information about how well their children are doing.

The school has the following strengths

- There are good relations between staff and pupils, which contribute to the pupils' good personal development and behaviour.
- The recent training for governors, and their restructuring, is rapidly producing a more knowledgeable and skilled group.
- Pupils are polite, behave well and play a very positive role within the school. Bullying is rare and so pupils feel safe.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons. Five of these were joint observations with senior leaders. Pupils from each key stage were heard to read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, a member of the local authority, and staff, including senior and middle leaders.
- A wide range of evidence was considered including: the school’s raising attainment plan, data and analysis of pupils’ performance over time, records of monitoring lessons, and teachers’ planning for lessons.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online Parent View, as well as 86 responses collected recently by the school. They also spoke informally to parents.

Inspection team

Keith Shannon, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jane Woodall	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding is above average. This funding provides additional opportunities for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties or speech and language needs. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The school meets the governments' current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has experienced a period of staff disruption through high levels of absence.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of consistently good and outstanding teaching, in order to increase pupils' progress, by making sure that teachers:
 - share more effectively the good and outstanding practice that exists within the school
 - match activities more accurately to the needs of pupils, especially to extend the more able
 - consistently use marking more effectively to let pupils know what they need to do to improve
 - give pupils more opportunities to organise and manage their own work
 - and that teaching assistants are fully trained to teach pupils about letters and the sounds that they make (phonics).
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - increasing the effectiveness of the way leaders at all levels check the impact teachers have on the progress of their pupils
 - improving the skills and understanding of the governing body in gathering information and using it effectively to provide greater challenge for senior leaders
 - ensuring that subject leaders have the skills necessary to accurately check and improve the quality of teaching and learning
 - developing more effective ways of communicating and involving parents in the progress and achievement of their child.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' progress has been inconsistent since the last inspection. Good teaching is not established firmly enough, and so pupil achievement particularly in Key Stage 2 has been variable. While it is generally more consistent in Key Stage 1, pupils made slower progress last year than in previous years.
- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. They do well in the Reception classes so that they are well prepared for work in Year 1.
- Pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 progress varies from year to year. In 2011 pupils' achievement was stronger in mathematics than in English and in 2012 achievement was stronger in English than mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is broadly average.
- Progress in reading is not as fast as it should be because there are occasional weaknesses in the teaching of letters and sounds. The progress of older pupils, in both English and mathematics lessons, falters when the work is too easy or too difficult. Teachers are not consistently setting work at the right level for the pupil; this is especially so for the more able.
- Progress of disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium funding, is similar to the progress made by all pupils. In some cases individual pupils make faster progress because they receive extra teaching that is of a high quality. More-able pupils are not always stretched sufficiently to make sure they reach the levels they should.
- There are few differences between the progress of boys and girls, and the topics chosen by teachers encourage both boys and girls to participate and be involved equally.
- Pupils say they enjoy lessons. However, they do not always know what they need to do to achieve the targets they are set.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies and there is still too much that is not consistently good. The main reason for this variation is that teachers do not always act quickly enough when pupils find tasks difficult or adapt what they ask pupils to do when they find the work too easy. Sometimes teachers do not demand enough of more-able pupils or give them sufficient opportunity to organise and manage their own work.
- Where the teacher explicitly sets out the purpose of the lesson and the explanation of what is expected from each pupil is very clear, they learn at a faster pace. The most successful teaching is well planned, with opportunities for group work and individual research. This was evident in a lesson where pupils were excited about the imaginative plot of a story they were to create. Pupils shared ideas, challenged one another and used both books and the internet to search for information.
- There is some good-quality marking which shows pupils what they have done well and how to improve further, inviting pupils to enter into a written dialogue with the teacher about their progress. However, this is not yet consistent throughout the school.

- The youngest children do well because they receive good teaching from skilled staff. The wide range of activities planned for the children enables all abilities to participate purposefully in both teacher-led and activities they choose themselves. Both indoor and outdoor learning areas are arranged and used effectively to promote learning.
- In many respects teaching assistants have a positive impact on pupils' progress. However, there are some weaknesses in the teaching of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics). For example, they do not all model accurately the correct letter sounds or those made by blends of letters.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning. In the best examples, ICT is used with skill by the teacher and pupils, and helps to engage the interest of the pupils. This was the case in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils made good gains in their knowledge and skills.
- Those who teach and support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well trained so that they understand the needs of the individual. As a result these pupils make progress in line with other pupils at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are respectful, behave well in lessons and around school, and understand why this is important. They respect each other's views and listen to one another in lessons. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and concentrate well. Occasionally, when the teacher is working with other pupils, they do not make as much effort as they could.
- Instances of bullying are rare. Although pupils report that there is occasional name-calling, they also spoke about how to seek help in order to deal with it. They have playground 'buddies' and look after one another well.
- Pupils clearly state that they feel safe in school. A very few parents expressed some concerns about safety in their response to the on-line survey. This was not the view of most parents or those who inspectors spoke to during the inspection. The school's own, and more widely used survey, shows that parents are overwhelmingly of the view that the school keeps the pupils as safe as possible. Inspectors found safeguarding arrangements to meet requirements.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. All pupils, including those who are disabled and who have special educational needs, are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the life of the school community.
- Attendance is good. The school works well with parents to tackle any persistent absences.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because, during a period of difficult staffing issues, standards have not improved enough. The headteacher has provided stability during difficult times, but the school has not moved forward at a fast enough pace.
- The local authority is supporting the headteacher, and a school improvement plan has been produced with clearly defined targets and responsibilities. The headteacher and deputy

headteacher have high expectations for the school and are determined that others share them.

- The teachers who have specific subject leadership responsibilities are not yet playing a full role in checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are working with colleagues from another school to extend their skills and to help them to increase the rate of pupils' progress.
- Leaders are not tracking pupils' progress in enough detail to identify how well different groups are achieving, particularly the more able. The checks that the leaders carry out to make sure that the teaching, in the classroom, is effective are not focused sharply enough on the impact of the teaching on pupils' learning and progress.
- Some parents and carers feel they do not receive enough information about their child's progress. Inspectors examined the types of information sent to parents and found that some opportunities to reach them were being missed.
- The range of subjects taught provides for an interesting and enjoyable set of opportunities for pupils to be involved in and to learn. Pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities including residential trips, sports and dance to develop their personal skills and qualities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is developing a much clearer understanding of both the schools' strengths and weaknesses. In the past the governing body has relied too much on information provided by school leaders rather than making their own comparisons of the school's performance with that of schools nationally. As a result, its view of the school's performance has been over-optimistic. It fulfils its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and is fully involved in the promotion, pay awards and appointment of staff. The governing body ensures the performance of the headteacher is appraised and that arrangements are in place for the appraisal of teachers. Through scrutiny of school finances governors are now aware of how pupil premium money is used to support learning. It has recently become more aware of how to use data to assess progress, and through further training governors are now better equipped to challenge the school about the quality of teaching.

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	123444
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	402162

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shelley Bates
Headteacher	Mark Wadhams
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2010
Telephone number	01952 386210
Fax number	01952 386229
Email address	H2175@telford.gov.uk

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