

# Mary Webb School and Science College

Pontesbury, Shrewsbury, SY5 0TG

**Inspection dates** 9–10 May 2013

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Students' achievement requires improvement. The progress made by students over time is not rapid enough.
- Teaching requires improvement because over time not enough is good or better to secure good learning and progress.
- Often teachers talk for too long and this prevents students from working independently.
- Some teachers do not plan lessons or mark the students' work often, or thoroughly, enough and students are not allowed enough time to respond to teachers' comments about their work in their books and this is slowing down their progress.
- Good examples of lesson planning and marking are not shared across the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- The senior leadership team has identified the right areas for improvement. Senior leaders are taking action that is already having a significant impact in improving teaching and achievement.
- The school has made several recent appointments which are having a positive impact upon students' improved examination results.
- The students behave well and say they feel safe. They are polite and show respect to each other and to adults.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons. Three lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at students' work with a senior leader to assess their progress. During lessons, inspectors looked at books, listened to students read and talked to them about their work.
- Year 10 students were taking their examinations during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to four governors, two representatives from the local authority, senior leaders, staff and students.
- Inspectors looked at assessment information, attendance data, the school's improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, a wide range of policies and governing body documentation.
- Inspectors took account of the 94 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View). They also received written communications from a parent. Inspectors also considered the 53 questionnaires about the school completed by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Barnfield

Additional Inspector

Neil Gillespie

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- Most students are White British.
- The proportion of students entitled to the pupil premium (additional government funding to support students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is low and the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs, or who are receiving support through school action plus is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- The school offers a small number of Year 10 and Year 11 students alternative provision at County Training in Shropshire and also at Walford and North Shropshire College.
- The school shares building space with Sevendale Special School, which is inspected separately. The present leadership team has been in post for 18 months.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching to ensure that students make at least good progress by:
  - improving the effectiveness of teachers' marking, so that it helps students make more progress and improve their work
  - allowing time for students to reflect upon the advice written in their books and then act upon that advice
  - ensuring teachers explain and demonstrate clearly at the start of lessons what students need to do to make maximum progress
  - pacing lessons so that lengthy introductions do not limit the time for students' independent working
  - making sure teachers' questioning allows students to answer at length and show fully what they understand and help them to make better progress.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management and eliminate inadequate teaching by sharing the good and outstanding practice on marking and lesson planning that is already in the school, including to ensure that students are not given work that is too easy for them.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. Students join the school with average standards. By the time they leave Year 11, their standards remain average, indicating that their overall progress is not good and that the school is not adding enough value to their learning. Nevertheless, the work of students currently in the school shows that progress is improving and the standards predicted for those currently in Year 11 are higher than previous years.
- Progress is not good because teachers do not usually allow students to work independently for long enough. There is too much talk from the teacher which slows the pace of learning.
- The school has entered students early for GCSE examinations in mathematics in order for them to gain their best possible grade. This has been successful for the present Year 11, 76% of whom have already gained grade C or above. The school is ensuring that all students in mathematics have the opportunity to improve their results even further by offering extra tuition and homework clubs and are predicting their highest results in mathematics in 2013.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their individual needs are identified early and they are quickly given extra support. Clear tracking and the positive effect of support programmes suggest that disabled students and those who have special educational needs are on course to perform to the same standard this year.
- There was no difference in the results of those students known to be eligible for free school meals and their peers in 2012. Pupil premium funding is being spent well on additional tuition through the appointment of two new teaching assistants who are focusing on revision sessions, literacy support and homework clubs. The small number of students who are looked after by the local authority also performed as well as others in their classes.
- For the Year 7 students who are eligible for support through the 'catch-up premium', the school has accurate tracking systems in place to ensure these pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The small number of students who use alternative provision as part of their education are gaining appropriate qualifications and making good progress.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Despite significant improvements, the quality of teaching is too inconsistent across the school to enable students to make consistently good progress. Nevertheless, an increasing proportion of lessons are now taught to a good or better standard.
- In lessons that require improvement, teachers do not always set work that is hard enough and expectations of how much students will learn are too low. Teachers often talk for too long giving students little opportunity to contribute.
- Sometimes teachers fail to plan for the different needs of students, and expect all students to do the same work at the same pace. In a Year 9 humanities lesson, this approach led to many students in the class becoming distracted because the work they were expected to do was either too hard or too easy for them. This meant that they did not make the required progress.

- Teachers' questioning of students, to check their understanding, is often too general and does not probe students' understanding of the subject. Students are not always given the opportunity to answer questions that allow them to explain more fully what they know, rather than simply answer 'yes' or 'no'.
- Some teachers do not explain and demonstrate clearly at the start of lessons what students need to do to make maximum progress.
- Marking and feedback to students across the school is variable and, in too many lessons, it does not let students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Even when this is done, time is not always given for students to act on any comments made.
- Where teaching is good or outstanding, planning of lessons is detailed. A variety of activities are planned to involve students in different ways and with different challenges, and regular checks are made on progress throughout the lesson. Students know exactly what is expected of them and the pace and challenge of the work fully involves them. They are allowed to work in pairs or groups and draw on each other for support. In these lessons, students feel they have been given responsibility for their learning and are proud of their work.
- All of this was seen in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, where the students tackled the topic of fractions and percentages using a variety of highly imaginative teaching methods including walking around the classroom investigating different colour-coded 'standard, star and superstar' questions that were highly motivational and allowed the students to make outstanding progress.
- There is some excellent support provided by teaching assistants, particularly for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Where this occurs, students make excellent progress. This is not the case across the whole school, and some teaching assistants are given insufficient direction from the class teacher.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Students are keen to learn in almost every lesson. Their behaviour during lessons is almost always good and this has a very positive impact on their learning.
- Students say they feel safe and demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they have a very good knowledge of issues around internet safety and about different forms of bullying, which they say is rare and when it does occur is dealt with effectively by the school. Responses from parents who completed the online survey indicate that they think the school deals effectively with bullying when it occurs.
- The school works effectively to maintain good behaviour and attendance and there are clear procedures in place to monitor and support students who have difficulties in these areas.
- The three-year trend for attendance shows the school has maintained this at above national averages throughout. Leaders are effectively maintaining this and are focusing on families who struggle to get their children to school and to make clear the effect that absence has on their children's progress and attainment.
- Students conduct themselves well. They are polite and courteous to visitors. They willingly talk to adults and are honest about their feelings about the school. The school promotes positive

relationships between students and they get on well together.

- The proportion of students out of school on fixed-term exclusions has continued to fall over the past three years and has always been below average.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Leadership and management are good because actions taken by the senior leadership team over the past 18 months have already improved students' progress and raised their standards this academic year. This is especially true in English and mathematics, where there is new leadership. For example, 76% of the present Year 11 already has GCSE mathematics at grade C or above.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders know what more the school needs to do to improve. Their judgements on the quality of teaching and the progress that students make are accurate.
- The weaker aspects of teaching have been identified by the senior leadership team and action has been taken to address these, with a positive impact on students' learning. Although leaders know that there is further to go, the proportion of lessons that are taught to a good or better standard is increasing rapidly.
- The headteacher has considerably strengthened the way in which teachers are appraised for their performance and does not allow staff to be rewarded by increased salaries unless they are successful in helping students to make at least good progress.
- School leaders ensure that different groups of pupils have an equal chance to succeed and they tackle any instances of discrimination.
- The range of subjects and topics taught has been carefully designed around students' interests and meets their needs to prepare them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, in a Year 8 personal, health, social education class, students studied puberty and reproduction in a well-planned lesson that allowed them to work collaboratively and maturely throughout.
- The Parent View responses indicate that parents have very positive views about the school, with the vast majority saying that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- The local authority is fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has worked well with senior leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Previously, governors have not done enough to hold the school to account for the quality of teaching and the progress that students make. They have not been rigorous enough in setting demanding targets for the school and for students' progress. However, the governing body now has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, including the pay and performance of teachers.
  - Governors successfully question and challenge the headteacher and set demanding goals for the future performance of the school.

- The school's budget is kept under tight review, with spending of the pupil premium being monitored carefully.
- The governing body ensures that safeguarding policies and procedures meet all requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123577
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	412767

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	502
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lucinda Burns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2010
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