

St Matthew's CofE Aided Primary School and Nursery Centre

Church Road, Donnington Wood, Telford, TF2 7PZ

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Achievement over time is not as strong as it should be, particularly for those pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, and those who find learning difficult.
- The quality of teaching varies across the school and not enough is good or better.
- Teachers do not always plan well enough to make sure that activities provide sufficient challenge. Sometimes work is too easy, particularly for the more-able pupils, and sometimes it is too hard.
- Pupils do not always know what they need to do to next to achieve their targets and to make more progress.
- Some leaders have only just begun to take a more active role in raising achievement and improving the quality of teaching.
- Leaders do not use all the information available to set demanding targets for different groups of learners to ensure that progress is at least in-line with similar groups nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- This is a rapidly improving school. Many pupils are currently making good progress and making up lost ground, including those pupils eligible for the pupil premium.
- The headteacher has transformed the culture of the school ensuring that all share her high expectations for pupils' achievement and personal development.
- Pupils are keen to do their best. Their behaviour in the classroom and around the school is good, and often exemplary.
- Leaders have identified the most important priorities and have made a good start in improving provision. Consequently, teaching is improving and attainment in all year groups is beginning to rise.
- The governing body is now playing a key role in driving the school forward and in the improvements that are being made.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage now make good progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons. Most of these observations were done jointly with members of the middle and senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, members of staff and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 12 parents who responded to the online questionnaire Parent View. The inspectors also talked to several parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- The inspectors looked at the pupils' work books, heard some pupils read, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, planning and monitoring documents, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Hall

Additional Inspector

William Houldsworth

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The percentage of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is almost twice the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several staffing changes, including a new headteacher, Early Years Foundation Stage leader, and a recently elected Chair and Vice Chair of the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and secure consistently good or better progress by:
 - making sure that work is not too easy or too hard for all groups of learners
 - asking more probing questions, so that pupils are encouraged to think deeply and using their responses to adapt activities in lessons so that learning proceeds at a faster pace
 - providing better support for some pupils in their learning, through the effective use of adults, and the appropriate use of resources, particularly for those who find learning hard
 - setting targets that make it crystal clear to pupils what they are expected to achieve and what they need do to next to make rapid progress, particularly more-able pupils.
- Strengthen the capacity of the leadership team, including governance, by:
 - setting demanding targets for all groups of learners, and compare these with national information, so that all leaders have a thorough knowledge of how well the school is performing
 - developing the role of subject leaders, especially in their checking of teaching, so that they have an even greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- In 2013, overall attainment in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics was average. However, given their different starting points, the progress most pupils made was too slow, including those pupils eligible for the extra funding through the pupil premium, and those pupils who find learning difficult, including those pupils with special educational needs.
- Leaders identified this underachievement and implemented more regular and accurate assessments to check and track the progress pupils make, so that programmes to boost these vulnerable groups progress could be put in place quickly. As a result, although when in Year 6 these pupils made better progress, their slower progress in other year groups meant that they did not fully catch up and achieve what they were capable of.
- In 2013 the gap between those pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils was too wide. On average, these pupils were almost 2 years behind other pupils in writing, and at least 1 year and two terms behind in reading and mathematics.
- School information shows that these pupils are now making at least the same progress as all other pupils in school, and in some cases more. As a result there are no real differences in attainment levels between any groups of pupils, including those pupils supported by the pupil premium. Work seen in pupils' books and in lessons confirms an upward trend in achievement for all groups of learners. Nevertheless, results show that in some year groups, and in some subjects, pupils are still not making sustained good or better progress.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 has improved since the previous inspection and in 2013 pupils joined Key Stage 2 with average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's focus on improving achievement in mathematics is evident, as all groups attained average standards, including those pupils eligible for the extra funding through the pupil premium. Likewise, the school's focus on phonics (the sounds letters make) is effective. Phonics are taught systematically and the percentage meeting or exceeding the expected level in the national phonics screening checks at the end of Year 1 are above average levels.
- Assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now accurate. The most recent assessments show that children started the nursery in September with skills, knowledge and understanding which were well below that which is typical for their age. There is clear evidence that a much higher proportion of children will attain age related expectations by the end of this key stage, than in previous years, as children are now making good progress in all areas of learning.
- Pupils who find learning difficult and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now achieving more than they have previously. Their levels of attainment are rising and more are achieving the standards that they are capable of. Nevertheless adults sometimes do not enable pupils to find out things for themselves, and resources do not always support pupils' learning well enough, as they do not enable pupils to practise practically key aspects of their learning.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching has improved, there remain some weaknesses and some pupils do not always learn quickly enough in lessons. Teachers do not use the information they have

on pupils' learning effectively to ensure there is the right level of challenge and sometimes work is either too easy or too hard. In these lessons, adults do not question pupils' thoroughly enough to assess their understanding. This results in pupils' learning not being moved on quickly enough, especially for those pupils who find some learning easy.

- Pupils have targets in their work books, and although some know what they need to do to achieve these, others do not. Furthermore, pupils are not always as well informed as they need to be about their next steps in learning. They wait to be told what to do by their teacher, wasting valuable learning time.
- Those pupils who find learning difficult, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often have good support, through timely prompts and clarification of their learning tasks from adults. However pupils are not always shown clearly what they are aiming for, and this is sometimes compounded by poorly matched resources, which do not support pupils' learning well enough.
- Much of the teaching observed was good, and some lessons were outstanding. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They ensure work is purposeful and engages all pupils. Although all teaching secures very positive attitudes to learning, in the best lessons, pupils know what they are learning and have a very clear understanding of what their next steps are. This is not securely embedded in all classrooms.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms and outdoor areas have been totally transformed. All areas are well resourced, and motivate children to want to learn. Displays not only celebrate children's achievements but stimulate their curiosity, and emphasise the importance of writing. Children are encouraged through key questions to find out for themselves.
- Adults plan exciting activities indoors and outside that totally engage children in their learning. Children wrote about the sad 'big bad wolf' using their phonic knowledge well, while others set off on a 'wolf hunt' totally engrossed in finding his paw prints. Adults skilfully developed the children's literacy and language skills in a stimulating and relevant context.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are keen to develop their practice. Teamwork is a strength, because the headteacher has developed an open and honest culture. Staff will confidently ask for support, and experienced staff willingly share their expertise. All take on new initiatives with enthusiasm, and are eager to improve through in-house mentoring and coaching, as well as taking external professional qualifications.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They are always keen to achieve their best, even when the quality of teaching is less than good. Pupils concentrate and get on with their work, because teachers have high expectations. Similarly, teachers assess pupils' attitudes and behaviour regularly, including their attendance which is average, and their punctuality, all of which are reported termly to parents.
- Pupils show great respect for each other and all adults. Relationships are strong as both pupils and adults all get on well together. All show care and concern for each other. Pupils enjoy working and relaxing with their friends. Older pupils help and care for the younger children.
- Older pupils also enjoy taking on extra responsibilities from looking after the library, to taking care of the rabbits and guinea pigs. They relish being part of the decision making of the school,

including organising and running a variety of committees, for example to discuss how the school can be more eco-friendly, or which charity they should raise funds for.

- Discussions with pupils' confirm the inspectors' observations, that behaviour is consistently good. Pupils have a good understanding of all types of bullying, and have every faith in adults to sort out any issues. Pupils say that they can remember only one incident of homophobic name calling which happened two years ago. The rare instances of any types of discrimination are the result of the school's strong commitment to equality, through the culture of the school, assemblies, and the curriculum, where pupils are taught to respect and to celebrate diversity.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Checks are carried out on all adults to make sure that they are permitted to work with children. Policies to keep pupils safe are in place and staff are trained so that they know the procedures to follow should they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Almost all parents' inspectors talked to expressed confidence in the school's ability to keep their child safe and happy.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because there still remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and as a result the progress pupils make over time has not been good enough. Equally, many key improvement initiatives are recent and have yet to secure improvements overtime.
- The headteacher has created a highly cohesive and talented team of leaders, including governors. All staff are totally committed to, and share her vision of achieving excellence. They are all fully on board in order to take the school on its journey of improvement. Leaders have demonstrated that they have the capacity to improve the school further. Self-evaluation is accurate and plans for improvement are focusing on the right priorities.
- Leaders have identified and put in place strategies to secure better teaching and pupil outcomes. There are regular checks on pupil progress, as well as frequent observations on the quality of teaching. Nonetheless, the monitoring of teaching of some middle leaders does not always focus on what pupils are learning and the progress they are making.
- The deputy headteacher has recently been released from her teaching commitment to lead on the quality of teaching and learning. She diligently oversees improvement activities and coaches and mentors middle leaders and teachers. As a result all leaders are beginning to secure improvements through paired observations, sampling pupils' work, scrutinising planning and analysing data.
- However, although leaders, including governors now have sound information on how well their actions are improving pupils' progress, they but do not always set challenging targets, or check the progress of different groups against national figures to assess whether they are being inspirational enough or having sufficient impact.
- The special needs leaders' role and responsibilities have also recently been reviewed. From September, having been released from a full-time teaching commitment, she is now able to focus exclusively on checking the quality of provision, to train all staff in effective strategies to boost progress, and to monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's actions to make sure that this group and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium are making better progress and that resources are providing good value to money.

- Teacher's performance is carefully monitored. Their targets are closely linked to the school's priorities. The headteacher has had to make some hard decisions and give some difficult messages when teaching has been judged to be weak. As a result, inadequate teaching has been eliminated and the quality of teaching is improving.
- The local authority has been highly influential in making sure that teachers, leaders, including governors improve. They provide a well thought out level of support, to ensure that their resources are targeted on the most important areas of school improvement. For example, in response to the headteacher's request for a review of the governor's work, key appointments were made, with subsequent training sessions to further develop governor roles and responsibilities.
- The curriculum, including the Forest School brings many subjects alive. Pupils are also able to explore and develop their understanding and appreciation of different beliefs and customs of others, through focused theme weeks. This promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- The new primary sports funding is well used. Staff have benefited from additional training and the range of physical activities and sports clubs, taught by the school staff, the school sports coach, and external coaches are extensive. The school focuses well on encouraging healthy lifestyles and promoting pupils' well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors in the past have not made sure that the school has improved quickly enough. However, their roles and responsibilities have recently been reviewed and all have had up-to-date training, including for data analysis. New governors, including the Chair, Vice Chair and the Early Years governors have injected a sense of urgency, expertise and commitment. For example, the school's tracking of pupil progress is much improved, and there is a better understanding of Early Years education. As a result governors now not only provide support but effective challenge and hold all leaders fully to account for their work. These key governors are the 'champions' for the three key stages, and have a good overview of the school's performance, including the key priorities for improvement, the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and personal development. Other governors are 'champions' for individual classes. All are becoming better equipped in gathering their own information about the school, through focused visits, meetings and scrutiny of documents. Both the Chair and the Vice Chair attend the termly raising attainment meetings, to check and question leaders about the progress pupils make, the impact of provision. Governors, now have a good overview of how well the pupil-premium funding is being used, and ensure that this is having a good impact on achievement. Consequently, the gap between the attainment of eligible pupils and that of others is now beginning to close rapidly. They check the effectiveness of intervention strategies, and progress being made towards the targets for improvement. Their scrutiny is well focused and is helping to drive the school forward. Governors monitor arrangements for improving teaching carefully and make sure that only good performance is rewarded financially. They have also supported the headteacher in eliminating inadequate teaching. Governors are diligent in making sure that safeguarding arrangements meet 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

Unique reference number	123557
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	440451

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	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roger Lewis
Headteacher	Kate Clark
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2011
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