

Stow Heath Primary School

Hill Road, Portobello, Willenhall, WV13 3TT

Inspection dates		3–4 December 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures

- Most pupils underachieve. They are not making as much progress as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, in 2013, were well below the national average. Too few pupils, currently in the school, are working at the levels expected for their age.
- There is not enough good teaching to help all groups of pupils reach the levels of which they are capable.
- Teachers do not always plan work at the right levels for pupils and the pace of lessons often does not hold pupils' interest.
- Teachers' marking fails to tell pupils how to improve their work.
- Pupils are still not involved or interested enough in their learning. They are too reliant on teachers and do not know what to do if they finish a task early.
- Leaders and managers have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. Expectations are not high enough to drive rapid improvement.
- Governors have not checked that the pupil premium is used effectively. The gaps between eligible pupils and others in the school are getting wider, especially in writing and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The governors and headteacher have created a harmonious primary school through the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools.
- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start and make good progress.
- Pupils are well cared for and they feel safe.
- Effective support is given to pupils in the nurture group.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching in all classes. They saw 29 lessons, nine of which were jointly observed with the headteacher and other leaders.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, six members of the leadership team, the headteacher, two members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire Parent View for the results to be displayed but inspectors spoke informally to parents as they brought their children to school to gain their views. They also considered the responses of the school's own recent survey of parents.
- Responses to the inspection questionnaire from 58 staff were received and their views taken into account.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- The inspection team reviewed a number of documents, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, the school improvement plan, data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports following lesson observations, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Pentlow

Additional Inspector

Roisin Chambers

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2012 as a newly formed primary school. It is an amalgamation of the previous Stow Heath Infant and Stow Heath Junior schools.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- A new governing body was formed in January 2013. Many leaders are new to their posts and there are still some vacancies on the leadership team.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class, which children attend either in the morning or the afternoon, and two Reception classes.
- A children's centre operates from the school site. This is inspected separately, and their most recent inspection can be found on www.ofsted.gov.uk.
- The school manages before- and after-school care for pupils.
- The school runs its own nurture group.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and most speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from families with a parent in the armed forces.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so pupils make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics by making sure that:
 - work is always matched to pupils' differing ability levels, so that it builds on what they already know and are able to do
 - the pace of all lessons is brisk enough to engage all pupils
 - teachers pick up and correct errors and misconceptions as they occur in lessons and in pupils' work
 - teachers use probing questions to extend and develop pupils' thinking
 - pupils develop the skills needed to become independent in their learning
 - teachers' marking in books tells pupils how to improve their work and gives them the opportunity to respond to the comments made.

■ Improve leadership and management by:

- increasing the frequency and rigour of checks made on teaching and learning and use the information about pupils' progress to hold teachers to account
- setting higher and clearer expectations for individual teachers in their appraisal targets to make sure pupils make good rather than expected progress
- refining the school's development plan so that it only focuses on the main priorities and has clear deadlines which show the impact of actions on pupils' achievement over time
- making sure that the pupil premium is used more effectively so that the gaps in attainment and progress close between eligible pupils and the others in the school.
- making sure governors carry out their own checks on the school's main areas for development
- setting clear roles and responsibilities for newly appointed leaders and filling vacant leadership posts as quickly as possible.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils underachieve. The schools' current information and work in pupils' books shows that progress was inadequate in Years 2, 3 and 5 in virtually all subjects, last year. It required improvement in Years 1 and 4. In all year groups standards are below those expected of pupils of that age in writing. They are also below expectations in reading and mathematics for pupils currently in Year 6.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 was well below average in 2013. The pupils in Year 6, last year, made inadequate progress and left the school, on average, two terms behind pupils nationally in mathematics and writing.
- Attainment by the end of Year 2 was well below average in 2013. These pupils made inadequate progress in all subjects.
- Progress in reading is not consistent across Key Stage 1. The results of the Year 1 national screening check on how well pupils know their sounds and letters (phonics) were close to the national average in 2013 and pupils built on the good start made in the Early Years' Foundation Stage. However, reading standards at the end of Year 2 in 2013 were well below average and the schools' own information shows that this group made inadequate progress.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge which are well below those typically expected. They make good progress due to a wide range of activities that help them build on and develop their early skills. By the time they enter Year 1, they have begun to catch up with other children of a similar age but standards are still below average.
- All ability groups underachieve. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do not make as much progress as similar pupils in other schools. Additionally, more-able pupils do not reach the levels of which they are capable because too few of them reach the higher levels of attainment at the end of Year 2 or Year 6.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium underachieve and the gaps in their attainment and others in the school are not closing. Pupils who left Year 6 in 2013 were approximately five terms behind their classmates in writing and two terms behind in reading and mathematics. They were also at least four terms behind eligible pupils nationally in writing and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because it fails to ensure that all groups of pupils make at least the progress expected of them nationally.
- Tasks set for some pupils are either too hard or too easy. Teachers do not use information about what pupils know and can do to plan or set work at the right level. This means that work given to them is sometimes easier than previous work. Additionally, the pace of lessons is also too slow and this results in some pupils becoming restless and not interested. It also slows down their progress as they do not complete enough work.
- Common errors made by pupils are not always corrected as they occur. Consequently, pupils

form bad habits such as, reversing numbers or letters, and misspelling everyday words. Teachers' questioning is weak across the school and does not probe or extend pupils' thinking. Additionally, teachers do not always regularly check on how well pupils are doing in lessons to make sure that they are concentrating and making good progress.

- Marking in books is not thorough enough. In some classes the marking is irregular and inaccurate. For example, some mathematical calculations are marked right when they are wrong, and others are marked wrong when they are right. Little guidance is given to pupils to tell them how to improve their work or it is too vague to be helpful. Where comments are made, pupils are seldom given the opportunity to respond to these or follow-up the guidance given in their next piece of work.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage helps children get off to a good start. A wide range of activities are planned both indoors and outdoors that build on their early skills. However, questions used by adults do not always extend children's speaking and listening skills well enough. Sometimes, questions require one word answers so that children do not benefit from explaining their answers or using longer sentences to build up their language skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is inadequate

- Pupils are not developing positive attitudes to their learning. Weak teaching and lack of guidance leads pupils to rely too heavily on teachers to tell them what to do. As a result, they sit and wait patiently if they finish an activity early. This limits the amount of work they produce and slows their progress.
- Attendance is below average but the number of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing as a result of the steps taken by the school.
- Behaviour has improved and there are fewer disruptive incidents as a result of the effective support given to pupils in the nurture group and the better management of pupils in lessons. Most pupils try hard to stay focused on their learning, even when the pace or level of work in lessons is not well matched to their ability, although some get restless – particularly younger pupils.
- Pupils behave well in and around school and they are polite and respectful to adults and each other. They know the school rules and the systems in place to deal with good and bad behaviour.
- Parents, pupils and staff who gave their views agree that pupils behave sensibly, are well looked after and feel safe. Records show that when incidents occur, they are resolved quickly and appropriate action is taken.
- Pupils know that different forms of bullying exist, for example, cyber and physical bullying. They do not feel bullying is an issue in their school and know who to talk to if they have a problem.
- Pupils feel safe at school and are taught how to keep themselves safe. They have a good understanding of personal safety and the potential dangers that exist when using the internet.
- The before-school club offers pupils a good start to the day. The activities and care provided mean that pupils are ready to learn when they go into lessons.

The leadership and management is inadequate

- Leaders have not made sure that teaching is good enough, throughout the school, to accelerate pupils' progress and make sure they reach the levels of which they are capable.
- The senior leadership team and the Chair of the Governing Body carry out checks on teaching. However, not all of these activities sharply focus on the progress pupils make. Judgements about teaching are therefore too generous as leaders have not taken sufficient account of the impact of teaching on the learning of pupils.
- The same targets are set for all teachers. These targets are not adequately linked to each teacher's individual performance to help them to improve. The targets are not ambitious enough to make sure that pupils make at least good progress.
- The school improvement plan is too lengthy, contains too many priorities and lacks a clear focus. Although a number of actions are identified, frequent checks are not carried out in order to determine how successfully leaders are addressing the issues and securing improvement.
- Many leaders are new to their posts or have temporary contracts. Roles have been shared but responsibilities are not clear and some key subjects do not have leaders. There are still vacancies for key coordinators. This lack of stability and clarity in the leadership team has slowed the rate of whole-school improvement.
- The pupil premium is used to employ additional support staff and teachers to help to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, and also to provide nurturing and behaviour support. This has had a positive impact on behaviour with fewer concerns raised by parents, but it has not been successful in raising the academic achievement of eligible pupils.
- The subjects and activities taught help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A range of visits, visitors and clubs provide memorable experiences for pupils. Values promoted in assemblies and lessons help create a unified school where everyone feels included. The new primary school sport funding is used to develop pupils' physical well-being and participation in competitive sports through after-school clubs and the use of sports coaches. It is too early to see what impact this has had.
- Gaps between the standards reached by different groups within the school are not closing rapidly enough. Equal opportunities are not, therefore, adequately promoted. However, discrimination is not tolerated and school records show that any racist incidents are tackled swiftly and successfully.
- This year, the local authority has carried out a whole-school review and is keeping a check on the progress of pupils. They supported leaders and governors during the merger but acknowledge that the capacity of the leadership to bring about improvement has been hampered by the temporary posts and vacancies.

■ The governance of the school:

The Chair of the Governing Body has made a start in supporting the headteacher and leading the newly formed governing body. However, governors have not carried out their own checks on the school's main areas for development to be satisfied that the school is improving fast enough. Governors have a developing view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement as they meet regularly and some members visit classrooms. They have carried out rigorous recruitment processes to ensure that only high quality staff are appointed. They are aware of how well the school is doing compared to other schools but governors acknowledge that they

have not checked the spending of the pupil premium closely enough to make sure that it helps eligible pupils to improve. Governors set targets for the headteacher and receive regular information about teachers' pay progression. They do not agree any pay awards where these targets are not met and are committed to seeing the school improve. Governors take part in regular training and their wide range of skills and expertise mean that they effectively carry out their statutory duties, for example in relation to finance and safeguarding. As a result, current 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	104323
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	426877

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	480
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin King
Headteacher	Vivienne Bunce
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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