

Aqueduct Primary School

Castlefields Way, Aqueduct, Telford, TF4 3RP

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- School leaders and governors have taken decisive action which has led to rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and in pupils' progress since the school was last inspected.
- Teaching is now good and some is outstanding so pupils achieve well at all stages of the school.
- Recent improvements in pupils' progress are resulting in higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers make regular checks on how well pupils are learning and use the information well to provide work that moves pupils on quickly.
- Pupils enjoy school and are safe.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have good attitudes to learning.
- Leaders carry out regular and detailed checks on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are keen to develop their teaching skills and they use the feedback given to them effectively to improve.
- Since the previous inspection, governors have improved their individual and collective skills in school governance. Their contribution to school improvement is now considerable. They ask searching questions and are well informed about the school's effectiveness.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not organise learning well enough to ensure that all pupils are on task at all times.
- Although this is improving, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make slower progress than other pupils.
- The presentation of pupils' work, including handwriting, is sometimes untidy and disorganised because teachers do not always insist on better quality presentation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons. Eight were observed jointly with the acting headteacher or acting deputy headteacher. An inspector observed, jointly with the reading manager, groups from the Reception Year and Key Stage 1 in literacy lessons.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and looked at the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and some other staff with leadership responsibilities. Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally during lesson observations and around the school. An inspector held a meeting with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school’s own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils’ progress. Documents detailing the school’s arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed.
- Questionnaire responses from 20 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. In addition, inspectors looked at the results of the school’s recent questionnaires, giving the views of 52 parents.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kerin Jones	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British. Of those from minority ethnic groups, only a very small number speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is average. This is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in the care of the local authority, and those who have a parent serving in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, four teachers have left the school and have been replaced. Two new teachers have joined the senior leadership team, one of which has been appointed reading manager.
- At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was temporarily acting headteacher and a member of the senior leadership team was acting deputy headteacher.
- A local leader in education works with the school on school improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and raise standards by ensuring that:
 - learning fully engages the interest of all pupils
 - teachers insist that pupils present their work tidily and pupils are helped to improve their handwriting
 - the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs matches that of others.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with knowledge and understanding that is generally typical for their age, with some at lower levels of attainment. Children make good progress in Reception and, by the time they join Year 1, most achieve the expected level for their age with a significant number exceeding this level.
- In Reception, there is a careful balance between children developing good personal skills, good levels of communication and the desire to learn through investigation and enquiry. These qualities contribute to good learning. Children concentrate for extended periods and show high levels of enthusiasm for learning, both in teacher-led activities and in those they choose for themselves. On 'Muddy Thursday', they had a lot of discussion with adults focused on their discoveries in the outdoor learning environment and they followed their curiosity to discover things for themselves.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average in 2013 and pupils made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This year, Year 2 attainment has risen again and the proportion of pupils already achieving levels above those nationally expected for this age in reading, writing and mathematics is good. This represents good progress.
- During the last year, there has been good improvement in pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2. In 2013, achievement over the key stage was not good enough and this was due to a legacy of inadequate teaching in the past. This year, improved teaching has led to good progress and improved attainment. At the end of Year 6 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are set to be above the national average. However, the otherwise good quality of some pupils' work, in particular writing, is let down by poor handwriting and presentation.
- The school's checks on pupils' progress show a great improvement in progress for current pupils at all ages. The proportions now making nationally expected progress compare well with national figures. The percentage exceeding expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average. This indicates that progress is currently good.
- The school teaches reading well, particularly in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1. The results of the Year 1 screening in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) show proportions similar to those nationally achieved the required standard. The few pupils who did not reach the required level in 2013 have been given extra support; one-to-one tuition or small-group teaching in phonics is improving their reading skills well.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and the very few who speak English as an additional language achieve well.
- More-able pupils make good progress. Younger pupils are grouped according to their achievements for literacy lessons. This means that they progress at a rapid pace and some Year 1 pupils, for example, are working at levels well beyond those expected for their age. Likewise, in mathematics, a specialist teacher works with more-able mathematicians to help them achieve the very highest levels possible at Key Stage 2.
- In the 2013 cohort, the pupils for whom the school received pupil premium funding made similar overall progress to others. It was not as good in mathematics but better in reading. They caught up in subjects overall. Their attainment was about a term behind their classmates in mathematics, a term ahead in reading and about two terms behind in writing. This year, the

proportions making expected and more than expected progress match those of other pupils.

- The school allocates the primary sports funding appropriately to improve pupils' skills and participation. Early evaluation of its impact indicates improved participation, particularly for less-active pupils, and improved attitudes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make less progress than other pupils. However, the effective work of a new inclusion manager, improved checks on pupils' progress, and teaching assistants better equipped to support these pupils are leading to these pupils now making faster progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Much of the teaching is lively and engages pupils' interest. In Year 5 mathematics, pupils immediately engaged in a challenging warm-up activity, which made them think and question each other. This set the tone for the rest of the lesson, during which pupils discussed their learning, helping them to make decisions about the most efficient methods of calculation.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, both in adult-led activities and in those where children learn through exploration and investigation. In literacy activities, all adults, teachers and teaching assistants alike, have good subject knowledge and a good understanding of the development of literacy in young children. Adults record children's achievements accurately, are fully aware of how well children are doing, and carefully plan what they will learn next. Adults talk a lot with children, guiding their work by asking leading questions.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers point out what pupils have done well and identify key points for improvement. Pupils find this helpful and there are many examples of where pupils have responded to advice and comments.
- Teaching assistants support pupils' learning well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, they work effectively with children, engaging in conversation with them, promoting good learning through a range of interesting activities. Through an effective training programme, teaching assistants now have the skills required to provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, the progress of these pupils is improving.
- On occasions, teachers do not insist enough that pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work is neat and well organised. Very occasionally, small numbers of pupils lose interest and too much time is lost in managing their behaviour.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils of all ages, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, have positive attitudes. They approach their learning with enthusiasm, which contributes well to effective learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school and speak highly of it. They say 'it is a good school', that they enjoy mathematics 'because it is challenging', science, 'which is practical', and they enjoy the extra-curricular music activities.
- Positive attitudes to learning are established very early. Children in the Reception Year relish the outdoor learning space, including the millennium garden. They play imaginatively, talk to other

children and adults enthusiastically and fully engage in vigorous activity with self-control.

- Pupils speak well about behaviour and say that lessons are very rarely disrupted. They speak highly of staff who listen to them, talk to them and 'encourage them to do the right thing.' They fully understand how rewards and sanctions work and how these have a positive impact on behaviour in school. They say that bullying is rare, but, if it does occur, it is dealt with effectively.
- Attendance is above average and the number of pupils who are persistently absent is below average. Pupils are punctual to school so lessons can begin on time.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school gives good advice to pupils during anti-bullying week; for example, about e-safety and 'stranger danger'. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school and show a good understanding of internet safety.
- A few pupils show concern over the very occasional use of 'bad language' by some older pupils. They would like the school to act more decisively on this issue. No inappropriate language was heard during the inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- Staff are led well by senior leaders and work as an effective team. Leaders at all levels have acted decisively on the recommendations made in the previous inspection report and on the subsequent checks made on the school's performance. As a result:
 - any teaching of an unacceptable standard has been eradicated
 - teachers and teaching assistants now have a clear understanding of how to promote good progress
 - accurate checks on pupils' progress give school leaders good information through which they hold class teachers accountable for their pupils' achievements
 - governors have raised the bar significantly and, through their own self-evaluation and subsequent training, are much more effective in holding the school accountable for its performance.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and learning have helped to improve the quality of teaching. Regular observations take place and teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils in regular review meetings. As a result, teaching is now consistently good at all key stages, and some is outstanding. Leaders set rigorous targets for the work of all adults in the school. These have been effective in improving teachers' work.
- Leadership at all levels is effective. There have been recent changes in some key areas of leadership. More focused attention is being given to the early development of pupils' literacy skills and there is new leadership for mathematics. The headteacher and governors have made sure that those taking over, and adults responsible for teaching groups, are well prepared and have the skills needed to step into their roles.
- Leadership of the way disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are educated is improving. A new inclusion manager has taken on this responsibility and has already set about making improvements. There are effective systems for the early identification of children who may need support. Teaching assistants have been trained so that they are able to provide increasingly effective support. One-to-one and small-group support is well organised and closely matched to the specific learning needs of pupils and the whole-school targets for improvement.

- The curriculum is planned to interest and engage pupils. When planning the topics, a good level of attention is paid to pupils' interests. This is a key factor in engaging pupils' interest and forming pupils' positive attitudes.
- A commercial scheme to promote early communication skills has been very effectively implemented in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1. Its impact is checked by the reading manager, who deals with any issues immediately. A training programme ensures that all staff have the skills to effectively implement this initiative.
- The curriculum, extra-curricular activities and the general school environment support the good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Each of the four strands is equally well promoted and underpins the pupils' positive attitudes to school and their respect for other peoples' feelings.
- The support provided by the local authority is good and has been an important factor in guiding school improvement. A representative of the local authority and the headteacher of a nearby effective school make half-termly monitoring visits, subsequently providing clear feedback. The school and the governing body have acted conscientiously on the advice given and this has supported the school's rapid improvement since its previous inspection.
- Finances are managed well. The pupil premium is used to improve the progress of qualifying pupils by funding them to attend school clubs and trips to give equality of opportunity, and on purchasing learning resources for one-to-one or small-group support. The school has made detailed arrangements for spending the primary school sports funding to improve and widen pupils' opportunities to take part in sports activities and improve teachers' expertise.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have improved their work in the school a great deal since it was last inspected. New governors have joined since the previous inspection. The Chair of the Governing Body has actively sought out people with specific skills to support the improvement of this school. Additionally, old and new governors have updated their training in order to deepen their understanding of their role and ensure their effectiveness.
 - Governors are now regular visitors to the school and find things out for themselves. They have a good knowledge of how well teachers are doing, through direct observations and through discussions with senior staff. They are fully aware of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
 - Governors understand how the school's performance and pupils' achievement compares with other schools.
 - Governors challenge senior leaders on school improvement. They set clear targets in managing the performance of the headteacher and staff, making sure that teachers' pay increases link to the progress of their pupils.
 - The governing body makes sure that all statutory requirements are met, including for safeguarding.

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	442561

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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shelley Bates
Headteacher	Mark Wadhams
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2012
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